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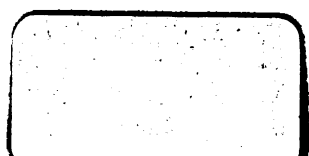
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## **PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION.**

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# PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION;

OR, .

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## CONSIDERATIONS ON THE COURSE OF LIFE.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

OF

MME NECKER DE SAUSSURE.

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### VOL. II.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE LATER YEARS OF  
CHILDHOOD.

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# PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION.

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## PRELIMINARY CHAPTER.

### GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS ON INTELLECTUAL EDUCATION.

#### SECTION I.

##### *Elementary Plan, and principal Objects, of Instruction.*

IN tracing the progress of infancy, it has been our great object to lay a moral foundation for the succeeding period of childhood, not only as being of the first importance, but also because in so doing we are following the order indicated by nature; for that instinct of sympathy, with which infants are for a time endowed, enables us to inspire them with good feelings long before their reasoning powers are capable of being exercised. But higher faculties are now brought into action; the child becomes able to reason, and to reflect; and these new talents must be cultivated and properly directed. Our attention henceforth must be occupied particularly, though not exclusively, with the education of the intellect; and we must determine what this education ought to be, both as regards

the moral improvement of a human being, and the proportional development of all his faculties. As it is impossible to embrace the whole of this important subject in a partial consideration of each passing year, we shall begin by offering a few general remarks, the application of which will be found in our future observations on this period of childhood.

All worldly success depends so much on the intellectual powers, that it is but too common for an instructor to consider the cultivation of these as the only object of his labours. Yet in so doing, he not only endangers the true interests of an immortal soul, but is unable even to form a well-arranged plan of education; a plan, the several parts of which shall harmonize together, and mutually assist each other. There will be an inconsistent and confused appreciation of every thing.

A principle of order is one of the first things to be sought for in education; and where is this to be found, except in the predominance of one great idea; an idea to which every other must be subordinate, and which may at the same time serve as a rallying point for all? We do indeed feel the necessity of combining the main branches of education; but neglecting to associate them with one common root, we are too often content with a mere superficial, and loose connection. Hence arises the inevi-

table but unfortunate distinction between moral and intellectual education.

It is indeed constantly asserted, and no doubt with truth, that the more intelligent men are, the better they become; and that the great end of all education is to facilitate our obedience to the law of morality. That this is frequently its effect, I am ready to admit; but has this been distinctly brought forward as the object of education? The result, when it occurs, is rather to be attributed to those habits of industry, order, and discipline; to that more frequent exercise of the judgment; and to the peaceful tranquillity which intellectual pleasures diffuse over existence, than to any earnest desire for moral improvement with which we have inspired our pupils. Above all, it is not the consequence of any connection which we have sought to establish between morality and the various objects of study. In fact, such a connection exists only in what may be called the sphere of religion; for it is here only that every thing is united and linked together; that those external facts which form the subject of instruction are associated with the internal feelings of the soul; that the laws of nature and of the human heart co-operate; and that science and duty become mutually connected.

Yet as there is nothing in the physical world which is not the immediate work of God, nor



in the moral world which is not the effect of the faculties which He has bestowed on his creatures ; so there is no object — no thought — which may not also be associated with his image in our minds. Every thing is then in harmony ; every thing becomes consistent ; ideas, previously incoherent, connect themselves in the mind of the pupil ; he acknowledges a unity of design in the whole creation ; and in so doing, his reason, feeble as it is, presents some faint resemblance to that Supreme reason which conceived this design.

But the intellect must not only be supplied with truths ; the focus in which these all unite must also be made the center of the affections. That God, who is the eternal cause of every thing, must become an object of love. Then will the moral law be not only understood, but obeyed, and obeyed with pleasure ; then will education display not only unity, but harmony : not only order, but beauty ; and then shall we admire that character of purity which high motives stamp on all our actions.

The importance attached by teachers to the several objects they propose is so much influenced by differences of opinion, of situation, and of character, that it would be in vain to attempt to offer any detailed plan of instruction, in a work on education. And even were the relative value of these objects determined, it

would still be impossible to make a judicious arrangement of the occupations of childhood, unless we were well acquainted with the order in which the faculties are developed, and with the best means of exercising them.

In public education, however, it is absolutely necessary to have some definite plan laid down; and even in private education, though so many things must necessarily be influenced by circumstances which cannot be foreseen, yet temporary plans may be formed, in which the same general principles may be applied to the various changes in situation constantly taking place. If we are not able to determine on a permanent system, we may at least arrange one, in which a proper degree of importance shall be assigned to the various objects to be pursued; so that each shall be confined within legitimate bounds, and the mind be left as free as possible when the time for determination shall arrive.

We are too apt to conclude, when we find flexibility existing in particular parts of any plan, that there has been a want of general views. But to leave certain parts of a system capable of alteration, or improvement, does not by any means prove that no system has been formed. Some plan is always necessary; for though it may be true that in allowing ourselves to be left to the blind guidance of circum-

stances, chance may sometimes be our friend, and thus in some degree compensate for our deficiencies, yet how much more frequently do its caprices oppose our main designs, and add to the disadvantages arising to our children from our negligence?

Foolish as it may be to pass through life without an object—and that object the most important possible—we are yet more inexcusable if we act in the same manner with regard to education. Ourselves the creatures of circumstances over which we have had no control; often forced on a career for which we feel ourselves totally unsuited, and governed by habits which have sprung up in our minds without our consciousness, we may imagine that it is too late for us to enter on a better course. But none of these excuses will have any weight when the question regards the education of our children. We are generally able to direct the circumstances by which they are influenced; we choose their future destination; and we are able to form, or to break, their habits. The instruction we bestow upon them is always voluntary and premeditated; and on us depends the arrangement both of their time and their studies. But the greater our power over them, the more should our determinations be matured by reflection; and unless we keep in view not only the secondary effects of education,

but the more important object to which these ought to be subservient, our determinations will have no rational foundation.

We cannot seriously consider this important subject without perceiving that any system not founded on religious principles, must on this very account be deficient. We cannot assign to religion the second place: even when we do so in practice, it is from weakness, from inconsideration — never from a deliberate determination.

But the question then is, how can we really confer upon religion the pre-eminence to which she is entitled? How can we make her interests outweigh the many other pressing concerns which demand our attention in this short life? Will she not claim that time which is required for the accomplishment of our various other occupations; for the long and necessary task of instruction, for instance?

Such fears as these, which are frequently expressed, arise from narrow and erroneous views of religious duties. No doubt these, like all other duties, demand a certain amount of time. We must have time to arrest the course of our worldly thoughts, to purify our motives, and to moderate our desires. Yet religion is from her very nature independent of time; her interests are with eternity. Immortal daughter of heaven, proceeding from that Infinite Being

who is the object of her adoration, it is in the heart that she establishes her empire; there she rules as a vital, actuating principle.

*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind*: — this is the first and great commandment for education, as well as for the whole course of life. But how much light is thrown on the true meaning of this love of God by the second commandment, which declares, that *the love of our neighbour is like unto it*. In truth, our souls are no sooner expanded by the diffusive warmth of the love of God than we feel a wish to assist, or to enlighten, our fellow-creatures. Our own happiness becomes involved in theirs, and in the hopes we entertain of contributing to their present and future welfare. Hence arises a charitable zeal, which only renders our intellectual improvement more and more necessary.

When our different faculties become imbued with a more active moral existence, the pleasure of exercising them is heightened by the generous wish of assisting our fellow-mortals. No sooner is this noble object seen in the distance, than the study which, at first, was only a duty, becomes a source of powerful interest; and in proportion as the intelligence of the pupil increases, and as the developement of his faculties becomes more

perfect and harmonious, his opportunities of rendering himself useful will be multiplied.

That pupil will have received the best moral and intellectual education, who has learnt to estimate properly the interests of the different classes of mankind, and to judge how far he must favour these interests in order to promote their moral improvement. Nothing, however trifling, will be neglected by him, if it seem likely to further this important object.

The teacher who receives his pupil from the hands of Religion will consider him as a sacred deposit, which he is expected to improve to the utmost; but on this very account he will constantly keep in view the improvement of his soul, and will regard with suspicion any acquirements, or any employment of time, the effect of which on the moral character may seem in the least degree doubtful. The slightest symptom of pride will make him at once arrest the progress of his pupil, and put a stop to a success which might prove hurtful to his character. One object in the cultivation of his intellectual powers is, to make him more capable of exerting a favourable influence over his fellow-creatures. But this object, at best only a secondary one, will not be attained if he become vain or egotistical; and as the instructor is especially responsible for the morality of his pupil, he will feel that it is

even a higher duty to render him good and religious himself, than to make him the instrument of good to others. He will be equally prepared, therefore, to restrain or to encourage his ambition : every other desire will give way to the one pre-determined object.

Two defects which are often remarked in the characters of men may also be observed in education. The lessons of experience do not make sufficient impression upon them ; and they do not possess those fixed principles — existing even before experience — on which her lessons should be brought to bear. There are certain results, easily ascertained, at which we must necessarily arrive, and all that we require is, to learn from observation the best method of arriving at them.

The first is, to inspire the pupil with a firm resolution to accomplish his duty at whatever price. The second, to preserve him in that state of health which is necessary for his moral and physical activity. These two objects cannot be estimated too highly : their value is infinite. Next in importance to them may be ranked the different advantages which are to be derived from elementary instruction. Some of these must be reckoned indispensable, while others will be variously estimated. Their comparative value must be determined according to the general rules of human nature, the existing

state of society, or the particular circumstances of the pupil — his situation in life, his character, age, and capacity ;—and here it is that the part of observation begins. From these data we form various plans, the combined result of meditation and observation.

If the instructor be himself strongly impressed with the importance of religious principles, he sees every thing in a right point of view. A soul of heavenly origin is to be trained ; and to develope its immortal faculties and prepare it to return to the bosom of its God adorned with those gifts, the seeds of which were sown by Him, is the end which he proposes to himself. In this respect, the views of the wise and the religious coincide. But those of mere superficial observers are widely different. Little concerned about either the soul or its faculties, they are entirely occupied in the communication of mere learning, and neglect the cultivation of the intellectual powers. Children, they say, are ignorant, and therefore must be taught ; they must acquire the most necessary information. This important, and indeed indispensable object, though it ought, at the same time, to be subordinate to a still higher, is the only one which engages their attention. And as the faculties may be cultivated in some degree by the mere communication of knowledge, it seems to them that, in employing the most efficacious means for enlight-



ening the ignorance of children, they have done all that is necessary.

Such is the course generally pursued ; and it is the more natural, because mankind in general keep a pretty exact account of the extent of their acquirements, whilst they have little or no idea of that of their intellectual powers. They propose to procure for their children what they feel they are deficient in themselves ; and hence a greater or less degree of instruction becomes with them the measure of a more or less careful education ; and teaching each individual what he ought to know, appears to them to be the cultivation of the intellect.

This view of the subject is, however, only so far false as it is much too exclusive. It is true enough that every fresh acquirement of knowledge must add to the cultivation of the faculties ; but it is equally true, that our being more occupied in merely storing the mind with information, than in the full developement of all its powers, is the cause of the greater part of the defects of instruction.

We see, then, that the exclusive importance attached to the mere acquisition of knowledge forms one of the dangerous snares of education. We are enticed by it to choose expeditious methods, and to avoid difficulties. The child appears to make a certain progress ; he knows the things which you have taught him ; he per-

forms what you have showed him how to perform; but try him in a different direction, require from him some new exercise of his faculties, and he is quite at a loss. And even when arrived at manhood, this may continue to be the case, almost without our being aware of it. By the help of memory and imitation, we often see people make their way tolerably well. The degree of civilization at which we are arrived has created a form for almost every thing; a mechanical education extends its influence over the whole course of life; and hence it is that the number of insignificant beings is so great; beings who increase numerical amount without adding to value — examples of that useless species, the common-place characters of their age and country.

It may, however, be said, that this is not a necessary result of this kind of education; that a sensible instructor will take care not to strike on this rock; that he will oblige his pupil to reason for himself in applying the knowledge which he has acquired; will lead him to understand the principles of every thing, and even to discover, or, if possible, form for himself, practical rules. But what does this prove except that learning alone is not sufficient; that we must propose to ourselves some other object than what is generally termed instruction; and that the true aim of every teacher should be to cul-

tivate the intellect, as considered apart from the materials with which it must be provided ?

There is, indeed, one species of instruction always necessary, and without which the task even of mere teaching cannot be carried on. Elementary knowledge, whether likely or not to improve the understanding, must be communicated ; but this is soon acquired. When this first task is accomplished, another presents itself to the instructor, for which he should have already prepared himself. To what was indispensable succeeds, first that which is only important, and then that which is merely useful. But as importance and utility are only relative terms, we may still ask, why important, and why useful ? If, setting aside, as we too commonly do, the consideration of the development of the mind itself, we merely seek to find out what will be most useful to our pupils in their progress through life, it will still not be an easy task to determine their objects of study. In order that these should be really profitable when they come to be applied, the future destination of each pupil should be known. On this account one of the most successful writers on education, Mr. Edgeworth, has advised parents to decide long before-hand on the profession to which a child is to be brought up. In so doing, he says, you will prevent his forming wishes in opposition to

yours ; you will avoid that protracted fluctuation of opposing desires, which sometimes ends in a desire to do nothing at all ; and you may, from his earliest years, give him an education suited to the views you entertain for him. This reasoning may hold good under particular circumstances ; but in general, such an absolute decision appears to afford too much scope for paternal despotism, and too little for the manifestation of any particular talent in the child.

As the future destiny of the child is then concealed from their view, what end should his parents propose to themselves in his education ? They will perhaps study the character and progress of the age : they wish their son to be one of the first in a career which all are following ; the old abandoned tracks lead to nothing ; if those who are now first had been better prepared, they would have been still farther in advance. Therefore, say they, we will take care that our child shall be well prepared.

But prepared for what ? The point at which you aim is a moveable one, and is constantly changing its place. How many times have we ourselves seen the face of things altered ? How many changes, entirely unforeseen by us, have been brought about by the progress of civilization ? We prepare our children for a period, which we cannot see correctly, because we view it through the colouring of the present moment.

We are now occupied in the discussion of questions, which may perhaps not be determined until other subjects, of which we have no idea, shall have been discussed and settled. We call up the past, or magnify the present, in order to judge of the future, which, after all, will most likely be something totally different from what we imagine. Human nature has not yet displayed all its phases; unknown wonders have yet to be revealed; and changes, whether for the better or the worse, are preparing, of which we have no suspicion.

Since then the choice of a profession is not in general determined on till late in youth; since a reference to the spirit of the age will tend only to give a vague, and often a deceitful direction to any plan of instruction; how can the teacher employ himself better than in thoroughly cultivating the intellect; in rendering this admirable instrument as perfect as possible, and thereby fitting his pupil for any situation in which he may hereafter be placed?

In this point of view, the task of instruction assumes a new aspect, and becomes something more than a mere apprenticeship to the art of living. Still, as this apprenticeship must be passed through, it is of importance to know how far it can be made to contribute to the full developement of the mind. By assigning to particular studies their proper rank in the

general scale of education, we are not denying their individual importance. An attentive examination will I think convince us, that in judiciously imparting such knowledge as is requisite for carrying on the social system, we cultivate some of the qualities necessary to our moral existence, but not all. We shall find that those studies which are physically useful, refer always to the same faculties, and exercise these alone. Some important ones are thus developed, such as attention—memory—the reasoning powers;—all, no doubt, very necessary, but by no means constituting the whole of the human mind.

But it has almost always happened that instructors have been too much influenced by partial and confined views. They have not troubled themselves about the cultivation of the faculties, when communicating their instruction in the first instance; and when convinced by experience of the necessity of this, they have still overlooked the importance of preserving these different faculties in harmony with each other. They have not only entirely neglected many which are as essential as the enlargement of the mind to the condition of human beings, but, even when occupied exclusively with the improvement of the mind, they have not taken a general view of the whole of its attributes, and have in turns overlooked each of its most noble endow-

ments. Sometimes the memory has been cultivated at the expense of the judgment; sometimes the reasoning powers have been exercised, while the imagination has been entirely neglected; and sometimes the faculty of investigation has been invested with such high powers, that it has been thought possible for the pupil to discover for himself all the wonders of science; so that, making no use of the stores of knowledge accumulated by time, the ignorance of the earliest ages has been engrafted on the intellectual weakness of infancy.

And so it will be, as long as the attention of the instructor is bestowed more upon the science he wishes to teach than on the pupil who is to be taught; as long as he is more desirous to form a living encyclopædia, than an intellectual and moral being.

There are three things which should claim our principal attention in education—the faculties to be cultivated; the knowledge to be imparted; and the means to be employed.

This last object deserves our especial attention. No effort can be obtained from the pupil without the excitement of some moving force in his mind. But these moving forces consist in inclinations which have a moral connection with the conscience; and hence we possess the means of influencing the character, as well as of forming the mind. Intellectual and moral

education are closely connected, and correspond in all their parts: it is in vain for the teacher to endeavour to separate them; they must always remain united. We sometimes produce an evil effect, when we are not aware of producing any at all; for the disproportionate growth of individual faculties, and the too frequent use of motives which are not acknowledged by the conscience, are both productive of evil.

Before we proceed with such observations as are naturally connected with the advancing age of the child, we shall make a few remarks on the three subjects above mentioned.

## SECTION II.

### *On the intellectual, active, and contemplative Faculties.*

That instruction which is not founded on a knowledge of the human mind hardly deserves the name of intellectual education. Before we undertake to form the intellect, we should at any rate know what it is capable of being made. The nature of the reflecting faculties, and the order of their developement, should be the subject of our serious meditation; for the hope of so cultivating them that they may harmonize entirely with each other ought to be the predominant idea in education.



In fact, almost every thing is determined by this important consideration. What studies must be selected; in what order they must be pursued; what particular method must be adopted in teaching them;—all these things suppose a known and determined object; and what should this be, but to realize an ideal model, existing in our minds, adapted to the various ages of our pupils?

Unless some such model exist in the mind of the instructor, his powers of observation will be only partially useful. He will perceive what faculties his pupil possesses, but will not discover those in which he is deficient; nor will he be aware to what particular point the efforts of education should be directed; not being induced by any motive to leave the beaten paths, he will merely follow the common routine of instruction.

Yet how can any knowledge be properly communicated unless we know to what faculty it ought to be addressed? What shall we say of a mode of teaching, which, while it professes to inspire a taste for the fine arts, weighs down the imagination; or—and this is a much more serious evil—of a religious instruction which leaves the heart untouched? Yet lessons are constantly so given; while the most essential point—the influence which any knowledge may have on the developement of the moral

existence—is entirely overlooked. The true value of every acquirement consists in the beneficial effect it may produce on the habits of seeing, thinking, or feeling. The impulse given by it to the intellectual faculties is the only proof of its real power.

No doubt a diversity of studies presents an infinite variety of resources for calling into action the different faculties of the mind. But do we always make use of the advantages thus presented to us? Can we flatter ourselves that we have done more than lay up a store of materials in the mind of the pupil, to remain there just as we placed them? And is the effect which these studies have produced what it ought to have been? Yet it is only by the knowledge and combination of these effects, that the instructor is enabled to correct the natural inequality of the faculties, and to establish amongst them a just equilibrium.

The most common fault of all instruction, and of intellectual education in general, is that it tends too much to the exclusive developement of the reasoning powers. The course of teaching itself naturally obliges the teacher to follow a logical method. The more he is master of the science he is to teach, the more thoroughly he understands its principles, the more does the methodical developement of these principles seem to him indispensable. Thus the same

routine is followed for a succession of years ; and, of course, habits, much too uniform in their nature, are contracted. Hence it not unfrequently happens that an impulse is given, which, however useful or desirable in itself, may have a tendency to impede the progress of some other faculty.

This fault may, perhaps, be avoided where no method is laid down — no routine blindly followed. And therefore the knowledge which is obtained as it were by stealth, through some of those numerous channels by which we communicate with the external world, never produces that fatigue, that dull weariness, which is generally in a greater or less degree the consequence of any effort of the attention. But on the other hand this knowledge, entering unperceived into the mind, does not afford the same exercise to the understanding: it is laid up in the memory as a treasure of which we are not required to give any account.

Yet, in taking a general view of intellectual instruction, it cannot be denied that it must, in great measure consist in the exercise of the reasoning powers; and in many respects this must be the case in moral education also. Nor would I wish to neglect this cultivation of the reason; all I desire is, that the feelings should also be exercised; that a more easy access should be opened to the multitude of pleasing impres-

sions which the human soul is intended to receive.

One of the disadvantages attending a studious life for children is, that the motives generally employed are merely personal ones ; such as direct the views of the pupil to the future, as connected with himself alone ; and do not call into exercise that noble disposition to devote himself to others, which may sometimes be observed even at a very early age, when children are engaged in active life. And when to this defect is added that of cultivating only the argumentative powers, can we wonder that our pupils are deficient in feeling ? We instruct, but do not inspire ; we scatter seeds in profusion, but have not previously fertilized the soil.

An entirely opposite fault formerly existed ; education was for a long time governed much too exclusively by that taste for harmony and beauty of expression, which was so powerfully excited on the first revival of letters ; a taste which, sympathizing with the religious feeling then predominating, produced a species of civilization peculiarly favourable to poetry and the fine arts. The necessity of ascertaining and arranging facts was not yet generally acknowledged. Sufficient materials had not been collected for raising a temple to science ; but it may be doubted whether the human mind, as

regards itself, did not constitute a more perfect and consistent whole.

After all, it must be confessed that no combination of studies can ever entirely develop the full powers of the intellect. Every study requires application and attention ; but there are other faculties which will expand only when the mind is free and unoccupied, and whose powers are checked by any effort being demanded from them. These, not being under the control of instruction, require some other exciting cause to bring them into action. Once awakened, they easily obtain materials on which to exercise themselves in the accumulated stock of ideas which the mind has received through the medium of instruction ; but we shall seldom find that the faculties relating to the feelings or the imagination, can be excited in the first instance by mere study. The most careful education may fail to inspire a taste for literature. The fine arts — even poetry, the noblest of them all — can only awaken in the mind impressions already existing there. They collect these impressions into one focus ; they bestow upon them a more definite and lively existence ; but they have no power to create them. Where there is no feeling for the beauties of nature, the fine arts — whose office it is to produce a deep and peculiar emotion, by collecting together her scattered beauties, and representing

her under different forms — the arts, I say, must be without power.

There is, then, some one disposition to the cultivation of which all studies should the more sedulously be addressed, as they are not themselves able to create it. And here it is that we again acknowledge the advantage of a religious education. We are naturally inclined to pay devout homage to perfection, under whatever form it presents itself. Objects which appear excellent in themselves excite an admiration approaching to devotion. And the same disposition which, in its highest state of purity and exaltation, bears our souls up to God, may, when not aiming at so elevated a flight, produce in our minds an ideal image of terrestrial objects. And although this disposition cannot itself be termed either piety or talent, yet, as it is highly favourable to both, and seems closely connected with some of our noblest faculties, it deserves to be carefully cultivated. I shall, therefore, I trust, be excused for dwelling a few moments on a subject which has hitherto been entirely overlooked in education.

That principle — happily universal — which renders us susceptible to gentle impressions, produces in some privileged beings the striking effects of genius, and in all it cultivates qualities highly conducive to our happiness, or our consolation in this world. Hence arise those

faculties which, from their preserving in the soul that calm, elevated, and serene disposition, termed contemplation, have themselves been called the contemplative faculties. We must not be surprised that they have not often attracted the attention of instructors. Quiet in their nature, and retiring from observation, they may be exercised without producing any durable result, or indeed any result at all. It is not easy for education to act upon them ; more especially as they frequently do not manifest themselves till the period of her greatest power is gone by. Finding them every where opposing her views, and counteracting that activity which she considers herself entitled to exact, she is apt to regard them with distrust, and to take pleasure in pointing out their disadvantages. But be they dangerous or salutary, they demand our attention ; if good is to be expected from them, their seeds, naturally slow in ripening, should be cherished with care. If, on the contrary, danger is to be apprehended, this is a reason for gaining a control over them, for they can never be entirely eradicated.

Passing over any attempt to class the various faculties of the human mind, we may briefly observe that it presents itself to our observation in two different states — one of an active, the other of a passive nature. In the state of voluntary activity the mind proposes to itself an object ; it

examines and compares, in order to arrive at a conclusion; its attention, fixed on the object of its observation, is not attracted by what is passing within. But this is not the case in its passive state; the mind then yields itself up to the feelings excited by impressions; and the thoughts, though making no perceptible effort, seem to expand with more than usual beauty and harmony. This is what is called the contemplative state. Its tranquillity is easily disturbed. If the intellectual powers resume their activity, if the attention be too strongly exercised, whether on internal or external objects, and we examine too carefully either the object itself, or the impression produced by it, the charm is immediately broken, and we pass out of the enchanted circle.

But it is not from present objects that this charm derives its greatest power; the feelings, the recollections which it awakens, are still more favourable to the cultivation of the contemplative disposition. Absorbed in past impressions we rise above temporary objects and time itself; and the imagination, freed from the shackles of reality, spreads its wings and soars at will in the region of fancy.

We have already seen that in the early period of infancy, before the reason has been awakened, the imagination reigns with undisputed sway, even though its powers are not yet fully developed. It reproduces the images of past events;



by the aid of some fancied resemblance transforms one object into another, or bestows life on inanimate matter. In a little while its power increases, it takes a wider range, and becomes more original in its representations; changing, as fancy dictates, the attributes of every thing, it exerts a creative power in producing ideal beings. The unknown and the impossible become realized in its conceptions, and it creates an imaginary world from the materials of a real one. And thus have the fine arts arisen. But no taste or talent for these arts would be formed amongst any people by cultivating the contemplative disposition alone. It forms only a happy preparation, a gentle and serene climate, which encourages genius to display itself. The imagination, no longer vague and passive, irresistibly impelled towards some particular branch of art, presses on towards a determined object, and is excited to activity by the desire it feels to realize its conceptions. Every healthy and well-ordered mind experiences the necessity of action. As soon as we have some fixed aim we naturally resume a state of activity. This must ever be the case, for we were not created for contemplation alone.

But though the contemplative disposition ought not to predominate in the human constitution, yet education should carefully guard against this precious part of our inheritance

being deteriorated or lost. And this seems more than ever necessary in the present state of society, when every thing tends so exclusively to active exertion. But how is this disposition to be cultivated? How can we arrest an element so fugitive in its nature, and impart to others a gift which seems beyond the reach of any influence?

In the answer to this question may be comprehended almost the whole of moral education; for though we have to do with what is no doubt an innate disposition, yet, whatever may have been asserted to the contrary, there is no intellectual quality which is entirely independent of the will. The natural faculties, the affections of the heart, and even the feelings — apparently so little under our control,—all submit at last to our authority. In one respect, indeed, they are independent of us; we cannot excite them at our pleasure; but by removing any obstacles which might impede their growth, by so ordering the circumstances of life that external influences and internal impulses may correspond and agree with each other, we afford to these faculties all they require, an opportunity to manifest themselves. And thus do we extend the empire of education, by adding to it what might at first seem to belong exclusively to the dominion of nature.

In considering the contemplative disposition,

for instance, as it relates to talent, it would seem desirable that during the whole period of childhood, as well as in infancy, we should preserve children as much as possible in that state of internal tranquillity — the source of harmony and wisdom — which is so favourable to the development of every good quality. It is only when the mind is calm that it is susceptible of right impressions; no good influence can be exerted upon it when it is agitated or excited. Many objects then pass without being observed at all, and others are viewed through a false medium. But in a state of complete repose and harmony, every thing awakens in us agreeable sensations; and if our feelings be lively as well as tranquil, we see every thing under a pleasing aspect, and hence arise the feelings of benevolence and admiration. This latter, noble in itself, and often the forerunner of a generous enthusiasm, is well deserving of cultivation; but we are too apt to check the display of it in children, by our ill-understood criticisms, by our raillery, and by the little sympathy we show for their perfectly natural tastes. A mind susceptible of admiration, will not be long before it becomes susceptible also of moral beauty; it will be disposed to admire truth and virtue, and to love God and every thing here which bears the impression of his divine image. If our pupils be inspired with an ardent admiration for perfec-

tion, and for every thing by which an idea of it is excited, religious worship will be the natural consequence; and when they are once imbued with a true feeling of piety, they will possess the only foundation on which to build a superstructure of earthly excellence.

### SECTION III.

#### *On the Communication of Knowledge.*

Deeply impressed with the importance and holiness of his vocation, the instructor must sedulously cultivate in himself high and noble sentiments. His intercourse with his pupil must be perfectly simple; he must be thoroughly acquainted with his moral condition, and his susceptibility to particular ideas or feelings; and if he manifest both a desire to sympathize with him, and an earnest wish to exercise a salutary influence over him, he will soon gain the confidence of a well-disposed child. But having thus lowered himself to the level of infancy, he must elevate himself again to the rank of man, by an approach to Heaven. He must refresh his strength, exhausted by the details of his occupation, at the source of all strength; and from that station take a general view of the whole task which lies before him. He will return better prepared for it, and more capable of moulding the mind entrusted to his care.

When we consider instruction with a reference to the general end of education, we soon perceive the particular direction given to the mind by each different study. All true knowledge is easily associated with a feeling of piety, and will even favour its growth, by connecting the idea of the Deity more closely with all our thoughts. Impregnated by this living principle, every branch of instruction will put forth moral blossoms, and in addition to its physical and earthly utility, may bear fruit for eternity. But, on the other hand, it cannot be denied, that every species of knowledge may have a dangerous effect, the cause of which should not be overlooked. If every separate study could be pursued at the same time, the hurtful tendency of each would be neutralised in the compensatory power of their mutual results; but this is impossible. Every study requires a certain amount of time; the mind is engrossed by it, and derives from it a bias, which, though not wrong in itself, is too exclusive; and were it not that the influence of an universal feeling — such as that of religion and morality — counteracts this tendency in each branch of instruction, habits, not to be easily overcome, would be contracted. For instance, in the study of the physical world — of all others the most innocent, and which appears so distinct from morality, that it would seem as if it could

not produce either good or evil effects on the pupil — it may be shown that instruction must always influence the mind in some way or other ; and that, if a teacher be not careful to make it the instrument of good to his pupil, he exposes him involuntarily to the danger of being injured by it.

So far from being in any degree hurtful, it would seem, on the first view of the subject, that the study of the natural sciences must be favourable to morality. Depending entirely on an attentive and accurate examination of sensible objects and phenomena, they may easily have a desirable tendency given to them, by making them the means of inspiring the pupil with a love of truth. All the facts and secondary causes which he is called upon to observe are referrible to the most sublime of all truths — the existence of one great Primary Cause ; and to this he should be led continually to recur.

The chain by which every thing is connected with God is shorter to children than it is to us ; for, as it has been observed by an intelligent author, “our science, our discoveries, our explanations, seem only to place the miracle of divine agency at a greater distance from us ; but the ignorance of childhood acknowledges it at once.” Children, therefore, may be said, in this respect, to approach nearer than we do to eternal truth ; and how desirable is it to preserve

to them this advantage during the whole period of their education !

So much happiness is derived from taking a religious view of nature ; there is something so beautiful and consolatory in tracing every where the marks of a divine original, and in sympathizing in the universal feeling which corresponds to these emotions ; that this disposition — of so much importance to our progress in youth, and which will abide with us even to old age — cannot be too carefully cultivated.

In fact, no sooner do we begin to observe the arrangement of every thing in this world, than we are involuntarily led to a feeling of adoration. Such admirable order, so many kind and merciful dispensations, are presented to our view, that our hearts are filled with pious awe and fervent gratitude. When in every fresh acquirement that we make, we perceive new proofs of the goodness of the Creator, the idea of this goodness ceases to be a lifeless feeling, the mere effect of habit ; and the stability of the laws of nature soon becomes in our eyes only the permanent expression of the divine will. Deeply impressed by the conviction of the constant presence and superintendence of God, a holy fear takes possession of our souls, and we adore in silence that Being who is at once so near us, and so far above us.

All these feelings and impressions are favoured

by the study of natural history. Life, the most familiar and yet the most wonderful of all phenomena, diffused as we behold it in the most profuse manner over the whole universe, must necessarily be referred to its infinite source. And when we see that every thing in the world is either life itself, or is necessary to the support and nourishment of life, how can we fail to acknowledge an eternal God as the cause of every thing that exists?

One great advantage which children derive from the study of the natural sciences is, that it teaches them to arrive with certainty at the truth; and were it only on this account, these studies would be invaluable. As every thing in them depends on facts — on real and sensible objects — children perceive at once the connection of cause and effect: they gain a habit of searching thoroughly into a subject; and are not contented, as is too frequently the case in the study of abstract ideas, with mere words. In what, then, consists the danger of these studies? There would be none at all, if they obtained only their proper share in the division of the different parts of instruction. No harm can possibly arise to the pupil from the observation of the visible world in which he is placed, so long as he is not allowed to forget that there is also an invisible world; but if his attention be so much engrossed by the idea of a terres-



trial order of things, that all feelings of a higher nature are lost, a deplorable habit of mind will be induced. The uniform action of physical forces will become in his eyes only the result of mechanism; and because human reason has discovered some of the laws by which the universe is governed, he may be tempted to deify her, instead of that Being who has conceived and imposed these laws.

But this danger may be easily avoided. If there be an earnest and continual anxiety to inspire religious feelings, a knowledge of the natural sciences will not be productive of any hurtful tendency. If all the moral faculties be equally developed, and each be allowed to have its free exercise, it will never be imagined that religion can have any interest in placing shackles on the reason, and thus depriving it of its natural powers. This faculty is governed by laws; its progress is regulated by Him who bestowed it on us in order to enlighten our path on earth. Urged forward from one consequence to another, it must arrive at a point unknown to us; and hence have arisen all the discoveries of science. When nothing intervenes to disturb this progress, it arrives at truths which must necessarily accord with divine truth.\*

\* There should, in my opinion, be such perfect impartiality in our explanations of facts and their consequences, that in bringing them forward I would not seem to be

If such be the natural progress of reason in a healthy mind, every enlightened instructor will be anxious to maintain its privileges inviolate; at the same time that he will endeavour to prevent the formation of such exclusive habits as would, even while seeming to make it paramount, restrain its freedom. Possessing an exalted idea of human nature and human duties, he will see that our vocation cannot be fulfilled, unless every talent with which we have been entrusted be cultivated; and an acquaintance with the wonders of nature will be the more valued by him, because in them he recognizes the sensible images, the symbols, of the great attributes of their Author.

We must never forget, however, that it is by the feelings alone that the soul is affected; and that mere knowledge, unless it excite the feel-

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constantly pleading the cause of the divine goodness and wisdom; I would not only reject every proof which will not bear the most severe scrutiny — such as may, perhaps, be confuted by the future discoveries of science, —but I would very sparingly make use even of strong arguments. For a spirit of theological disputation tends as much to deaden the spirit of our studies, as a devotional one does to vivify them. Every additional demonstration of evidence only hurts the understanding which is already convinced, and may even wound the heart which is full of love towards its Creator. Make God present in the soul, and display his works; they will speak more forcibly than you can.

ings, will have no influence on the moral sentiment. Feelings may indeed be associated with the truth when this is once ascertained, but the spirit of inquiry has no natural tendency to produce them. If we study the wonders of creation without any reference to our own impressions, they may fill us with astonishment without causing any other emotion. But if attention be directed to our own consciousness of weakness, and to our continual want of assistance, we shall arrive at a more just appreciation of surrounding objects.

Nature has a double claim on our gratitude; she not only supplies our wants, but delights our hearts by the admiration which her charms excite. And hence arise two branches of education, presenting to the instructor additional opportunities for the happy developement of his pupil's faculties — the study of the necessary arts, in which utility is the principal object — and that of the fine arts, by which we cultivate a taste for beauty.

Children easily understand what utility is, but still they require to have it explained to them. Infancy, devoid as it happily is of all care, knows little of real wants. It conceives eager and impetuous desires; and if these be not gratified, its grief is violent, but not aggravated by any fears for the future. Ignorant of the evils which would result from the privation of

the necessities of life, and hoping more than fearing, its most serious grievances are, after all, only disappointments.

Children must therefore be taught the sad consequences attendant on poverty, and the conditions on which existence depends. Learning how the pressing wants of our nature are provided for, they will also learn to adore that good God who has afforded us the means of satisfying them; and to feel an affection for their fellow-creatures who make use of these means for their good; and thus both the understanding and the heart will be exercised.

The study of the arts and of the discoveries connected with useful industry may be productive of different moral tendencies. Like that of the sciences themselves, of which the mechanical arts are only the application, it may foster a love of truth, and also of utility, while it may at the same time awaken feelings of charity in the heart. When we see so many industrious beings, earning bread for themselves and others by the sweat of their brow, our compassion is moved, and we feel a deep interest in our poorer brethren — children like ourselves of a merciful Father. This interest extends to their moral welfare as well as to the supply of their physical wants: and we begin to perceive that by improving their dispositions, their lot on earth may be ameliorated.

The pupil who is himself destined to a laborious career, should be particularly warned to be on his guard against that gradual deterioration of our best motives, to which human nature is so liable. Nothing but a frequent and strict examination of his conscience, as if in the presence of God, will preserve his moral feelings in such a state of purity, as will authorise him to appeal from them to the conscience of his fellow-creatures. No one can exert a good influence over others who is not good himself; and no one can, without continual and careful watchfulness, keep himself free from evil. The constantly increasing extension of industry, by bringing men of education into more frequent and intimate communication with the poorer classes, multiplies their opportunities of being useful to them. Some may hope to benefit them by diffusing knowledge amongst them; others by their inventions, which give rise to fresh modes of employment; all, by cultivating in them kind feelings and the love of God.

A happy influence may be exerted on education by the study of other arts more pleasing in their nature; for much as the pupil's gratitude may be excited by hearing of the care of Providence to provide for our wants, it will perhaps be even more deeply moved by the idea of the various pleasures, so lively in their nature, and so little necessary to our mere existence,

with which the goodness of God has furnished us. As the gift of a useless toy often appears to a child a greater mark of his father's love than the food with which he supplies him, so all the luxury of creation — the perfume of flowers — the touching power of music — the beauty of natural scenery, — are, of all the innumerable benefits of our heavenly Father, those which raise the most lively emotions in our breast.

But unless a taste for the beautiful have been early developed, these pleasurable sensations will never acquire their full power over the mind. As it is this taste which is displayed in the fine arts, and in all the poetical part of literature, these sources of pleasure must remain entirely unknown to those who are incapable of admiration. The fine arts, however, cannot be said to address themselves directly to the intellect; they speak to us through the medium of the feelings; and hence it is, that they may, if ill directed, be productive of evil. But a taste for moral beauty, awakened and excited in the youthful soul by religious feeling, will cause the pleasure they afford to be one of the purest kind. Time, however, is required to accomplish this. Children have indeed a taste for what is beautiful, but it is often displayed in so childish a manner as to be easily overlooked. For the present I shall not enter more

at length on the consideration of this subject, but defer it to a later period.

I might now speak of the moral sciences, and show how they are also susceptible of opposite tendencies ; but as these studies are, very properly, reserved to a more advanced age, we can at present do nothing more than prepare the way for their future reception. I would however earnestly advise such a preparation to be made, by imparting to the pupil a knowledge of history. By this study, more than by any other, is a knowledge of human nature acquired ; by it we are enabled to discover what contemporary observation cannot teach us ; and from it the mind may procure such food as will nourish and strengthen it from childhood to old age. But in order that this food may be agreeable to the palate, we must take care that the narrative of facts be full of life ; that it be simple, animated, and consistent with the spirit of the age which it professes to represent. Nor should we be too anxious to inculcate opinions through the medium of history : for by thus prescribing to the reason what judgment it ought to form, we prevent the free exercise of its powers. Let us trust to the influence of a religious education, and to that glow of virtuous feeling, the expression of which will never be checked by a Christian teacher ; and let us not

discourage a taste for this useful and pleasing study, by making it a lesson of morality, or a premature introduction to a system of philosophy. On the contrary, what is to be wished and expected from the study of history, is, that it should inspire children with a taste for the noblest truths, without appearing to teach them dogmatically. An animated narrative will easily excite virtuous feelings in the youthful breast. An appeal to patriotism, courage, devotion, will always be understood and acknowledged; but in pronouncing ourselves, or requiring children to pronounce, a judgment on the morality of particular actions, it seems to me that we mistake their powers. Let their good sense be left to itself, and it will retain its natural simplicity; instead of calling upon their judgment to make perhaps a false decision; let it be our object to influence their imagination. From its flashes of light, children often acquire noble views, at a time when their judgment, accustomed to be exercised only on common subjects, would bring every thing to their standard, and would thus often for a length of time profane the majesty of history.

At the same time we should endeavour to make our pupils understand the plan we are pursuing: we should tell them that we consider them as religious beings; and that if they are not influenced by religious feelings they may



be tempted, in reading the history of past ages, to render that homage to physical courage, talents, or success, which should be paid only to virtue. Without giving a false colouring to facts, or cooling the ardour of their generous emotions, we may teach them that the admiration which they are inclined to bestow on apparently heroic actions, is not always sanctioned by the immutable laws of justice.

Thus it is that, if we view things in a religious point of view, every study may be pursued without danger; if the mind be deeply imbued with a devotional spirit, the effects of any opposing influence will be destroyed, and the pupil may be safely entrusted with all the valuable treasures which have been accumulated by science.

#### SECTION IV.

##### *On the relative Value of different Methods of Instruction.*

Two different plans may be observed in the instruction of children; sometimes we treat them as if they were entirely under our control, and at other times as if they were completely free agents. Thus we exercise our power in determining for them their course of study, and we influence their will by inspiring them with a wish to improve. It follows, therefore, that both the mode of instruction, and the stimulants

employed to excite their energy, should be carefully chosen.

The various modes of teaching — far more numerous than the subjects to be taught — are in a continual state of progressive improvement. No fixed rules are yet laid down respecting them, but every thing seems to be undergoing the test of experience; we shall therefore confine ourselves at present to a few general observations.

In order to entitle any particular method of teaching to a claim on our approbation, we require that it should insure to the pupil the greatest progress, both in theory and practice, in the shortest time. Like every other good instrument, it must work well and quickly. This should be the object of all teaching for every age; but there is also another object, which, though not so prominent, should never be overlooked — the means employed ought to favour as much as possible the developement of all the faculties.

In our estimation of the value of any method, time should always form a very important element. It is not enough that progress is made — the pupil must himself be aware that he is advancing. As the time which can be bestowed on any particular study must always be limited, it is of great consequence that the merit of every method in this respect should be

sufficiently ascertained to enable us to judge of the probability of a pupil of moderate abilities reaping benefit from it. It would also be very desirable that an account should be taken of the amount of time bestowed on each branch of instruction. If, in any method of teaching, the time taken up in preparatory exercises would, if the pupil were to change his course of study, be entirely lost, that method is more or less faulty. Every moment is important in education, and ought to produce its own peculiar fruit.

By requiring a certain degree of progress both in the theory and practice of any study, we insure the developement of the faculties. If the pupil be only required to understand what is explained to him, the faculty of investigation remains dormant, and his mind may be unexercised, even while his attention is on the full stretch. In order to excite him to real activity, some subject of inquiry must be proposed to him. The truth of this is now almost universally acknowledged; and the application of it has been the subject of many experiments in education. From the time when Pestalozzi gave the first impulse to the analytical mode of teaching, it has been every where tried. Desirous of making the pupil discover for himself the principles of every science, the master places the facts before him;

and, as if ignorant himself of their bearing upon each other, asks him to compare and judge of them. If he make no observations, or only trifling ones, he is insensibly led into the right track by means of questions, till at length some lucky idea flashes upon him, and at once discovers to him the principle of which he has been in search. But as, during this process, the pupil has neither any idea of the conclusion at which he is expected to arrive, nor any distinct object in view, he is scarcely treated like a rational being, although the honour of the discovery may be flatteringly attributed to him. He does not understand why some of his remarks are praised and others rejected; and as he does not believe in the supposed ignorance of his master, (and indeed ought not to do so, if his respect for him is to be maintained,) he wonders why he is required to search so long for what it would have been more natural to have told him at once.

It must be confessed that the respective parts of master and scholar seem better preserved by the contrary method; in which we begin by laying down the principle to be established. Then, he who knows speaks, and he who is ignorant listens — asking such explanations as may be necessary. Having nothing to do with a confused mass of facts, which he is

required to distinguish and separate even before he understands them, the memory of the pupil is not prematurely loaded; and enlightened by the order which governs his progress, he sees clearly the road before him. Yet we may here be deceived by appearances. Principles and their consequences are received by the pupil on the authority of the master; but representing, as they do, nothing tangible or real, we cannot be always sure that he attaches any meaning to them. His discernment may hereafter be put to the test by his application of them; but even if it prove correct, and his judgment be thus exercised, his inventive faculties lie idle.

For the purpose of keeping the mind really active, we must admit the superiority of the method of teaching by investigation. And we may be further encouraged to make use of it, by observing that children, in fact, follow the same plan, though, of course, without being aware of it, both in the involuntary and in the mechanical acquisition of knowledge. In learning to speak, for instance, having possessed themselves of some words, they are by these assisted in acquiring others; and thus proceeding from the known to the unknown, they arrive at last at the full understanding of all. It would seem, then, that by leading our pupils to discover the relation of facts to each other, and to give an

account of their discoveries, we render the path of knowledge easier to them. Advancing thus from one fact to another, they reach at length the principle; and, in attaining it, have followed a more logical method than if this principle had been explained to them in the first instance. It may, however, be doubted whether this logical order is universally applicable. In my opinion, a combination of both methods would afford in many respects the greatest advantage.

The principal defect of the explanatory mode of teaching is, that the road is so smooth, and so well tracked, that both master and pupil are apt to fall asleep in travelling over it. And, on the other hand, the too exclusive employment of the interrogatory system might, perhaps, render the pupil incapable of profiting by any other method, and impatient or inattentive to the teaching of his future instructors. This is a fault to which all children of lively dispositions are liable, and one which often prevents their receiving such information as is necessary for their instruction; mentally occupied with conjecturing what is going to be explained to them, this premature investigation produces the effect of distraction. Besides, the power of following attentively the progress of an explanation is in itself a valuable quality, and closely associated with habits of deference and modesty. Why should not a variety of modes of teaching be employed?

How much soever we may value unity of design and execution in this subject, it surely is not worth so much as the acquisition of an additional good disposition, moral or intellectual.

On an attentive examination of this subject, we shall find that the different conditions required by each particular method will mutually modify each other, and that no single advantage must be estimated apart from the rest. Thus, even that most important advantage, the active exercise of the mental powers, might, if allowed to predominate too exclusively, lead to subtleties, tiresome in themselves, generally useless as regards the study to which they are applied, and leading to a wearisome prolixity; while, on the other hand, if we neglect the great object of developing the intellect, a desire to economize the time of our pupil might lead us into the error of a mere mechanical education. But let us only secure this one essential point—the cultivation of all the intellectual powers—and every method, even that of mere routine, may be safely employed.

But when we have arranged our plans of instruction as skilfully as possible, and have selected the best methods of teaching, we have not done all that is necessary. We have still to influence the will; this faculty, of all others the most uncontrolled and most impetuous in children, must be either directed or subdued.

Unless the master obtain the co-operation of his pupil, all his knowledge, and all his meditations, will be of little avail. In order to accomplish this, he must bring into action some of those moving forces which act most powerfully on the soul. The secret of all success lies in being able either to profit by the natural inclinations, or to create others in their place.

Fortunately, there are some feelings, almost universal, which are highly favourable to the progress of various branches of knowledge. Such are, amongst others, the lively pleasure which almost all children take in flowers, shells, birds, and all the beautiful objects relating to natural history; the interest awakened by the extraordinary events or heroic adventures of history; the delight arising from the arts of music and drawing — all calculated to excite their curiosity or gratify their self-complacency, by offering little difficulties to be surmounted. From these natural sources, a taste for study may be imbibed; and by them, motives to be employed in education are furnished, the strength of which may be increased without any risk of danger. The more children are influenced by them, the more energy of character do they possess, the more agreeable are they as children, and the more promising is the prospect they afford for the future.

It is, however, of the greatest importance that



the power of these motives should be properly estimated. It exists, working silently, but often without any perceptible trace of its operations; and its effects vanish in the presence of more animated pleasures. We must not hope that the imagination of children will be as much struck by the charms of study, as by the more noisy delights and more riotous sports in which all their energies are called forth. Children have little idea of the pleasure, the soothing consolation, which, when the sacrifice of more lively amusements has once been made, always accompanies a taste for intellectual occupations. Yet, though we must not expect them to show a preference for these employments, we must carefully endeavour to cultivate a taste for them; and, if the course of moral development be well directed, this taste, once awakened, will grow with increasing years, and at last no pleasures, but such as can be associated with our purest feelings, will be valued.

But great delicacy of management is required in the cultivation of these feelings, nor is it judicious to say much to children of the happiness derived from them. In fact, it is practising a species of deception to announce to them as pleasures, what they are not yet capable of understanding or enjoying. Nor will the hope of such enjoyment be a sufficient inducement to excite their industry; other motives must be

used ; but always with one indispensable condition, that the natural inclinations, — the guarantees of mental activity during youth, — be not injured by them.

But suppose these motives should tend to endanger the moral feeling, or at least to injure the natural gentleness and equanimity of the character ? Such a supposition demands a serious examination, and must not be overlooked. We shall elsewhere consider the subject of rewards and punishments — those minor means so evanescent in their effect. But there is a greater motive, of enduring effect, often used, which must be attentively examined — the excitement, in a high degree, of the feeling of self-love, which, gaining more and more influence with increasing age, too often becomes at last the ruling passion of the mind.

In speaking of emulation, we must, however, understand distinctly what is intended by the word. If we mean to express by it the forcible effect of example — that sudden conviction of power which is produced by beholding the success of others — that infectious ardour which naturally arises amongst those who are pursuing the same object — this result arising from a community of labour is as justifiable as it is advantageous. The wish to be noticed, and to excite a feeling of esteem or approbation, cannot be blamed, and should not be checked.

But the desire to raise ourselves above others degenerates only too easily into that of depressing them below ourselves; and surely this disposition in children should not be encouraged by education! There is a great difference between allowing a feeling to exist, and exciting and fostering it in every possible manner. In this, as in every thing else, our duty is limited by our power. Self-love every where exists; and to pretend to extirpate it is a mere chimera; but voluntarily to strengthen its predominance is morally wrong. And when we see institutions so constituted as to encourage feelings of envy — to excite in every pupil the wish to depress his competitors, and make him receive pleasure from the failings of others — how can we reconcile ourselves to such an order of things? How can it be asserted that knowledge must render men better, when, for the sake of a little more knowledge, we expose them to the danger of becoming worse characters? It is said, indeed, that very little evil arises from this cause; but if ever so little evil be produced, and no moral good effected, is this a reasonable apology for the system?

It is asserted, too, that the careless indifference of childhood exempts it from any feeling of jealousy; but this does not prevent a later age, in which new passions are excited, from being keenly susceptible of such a feeling. And since

every effect is always proportioned to its cause, and we find that in those countries where the greatest competition for honours exists amongst children, secret pride, or open vanity, are but too common faults, it is hardly possible to deny the injurious effect of this system of education.

Another excuse has, however, been brought forward in its defence; namely, that in thus exciting a spirit of emulation in children, we are only preparing them for real life, in which this spirit is the source of all energetic activity. But allowing this to be the case, would it not seem as if Providence, in exempting this tender age from all harsh or bitter feelings, and inspiring it with gaiety, carelessness as to the future, sympathy in the pleasures of others, and indifference as to their opinion, had clearly intended to preserve it from these exasperating struggles?

If we consider the subject attentively, we shall have no difficulty in perceiving what are the evil effects likely to arise from the feeling of self-love being too powerfully excited. The mind becomes agitated and disturbed, and no longer in a state to receive good impressions. We all know that when preoccupied by our own little personal feelings, every thing which does not bear upon the interest of the moment passes by us unnoticed. We are not in unison

with nature; some feelings are too strong, others too weak; our relations with our fellow-creatures are changed; and, what is the greatest evil of all, that mutual good-will, by which the hearts of all are opened to one another, is destroyed. Self-love persuades each that he is superior to others; and as the consciousness of thinking himself so makes him infer that others consider him as their inferior, kindly feelings are superseded by ill-will.

These remarks are equally applicable to childhood. We injure children in various ways, when we make them live in that state of irritation which is caused by the wish to supplant others, or the fear of being supplanted by them; we produce a painful excitement in their too sensitive nerves; we hurt their tempers; and we lead them to console themselves for their own want of success, by ridiculing or slandering their more successful rivals. Such, indeed, is the contagious nature of this evil, that masters themselves are frequently infected by it, their kindly impulses and generous enthusiasm checked, and the best fruits of their instruction lost.

It is true, that by the help of such a stimulus as a spirit of emulation applies, the attention may be fixed on a given subject, and some slight advantage apparently gained. But a short trial is not enough to enable us to judge of the effect of such a stimulus. Self-love,

like any other exciting cause, may give a temporary energy, followed too often by languor; and though it may not be required by naturally active minds in order to render them ambitious of distinction, it may yet urge on such indolent dispositions as seem destined to mediocrity. But if we thus procure for them an advantage, by making them attain a degree of instruction of which they seemed incapable, at what a price is this advantage obtained! What pretensions, not likely to be recognized by society, are excited! what bitter recollections of college honours, of which they imagine themselves to have been unjustly deprived! And how often does the self-love which has been thus awakened find an exercise for itself in useless objects, and aspire only to that success which is rewarded by the approbation of the vulgar!

If we find, then, on examination, that certain means are injurious to morality, and that, even as respects that developement of the faculties which they are supposed to favour, they have many disadvantages, should they not be discouraged by education, the paramount duty of which is to watch over the morality of the pupil? This seems undeniable; yet it is not without regret that we cause any uneasiness to parents, as to the probable effects of the system followed in those institutions to which they have entrusted their children. But truth must be our

first consideration : as moralists, our task is easy, for the principles of morality are immutable, and we possess in them a firm and immovable foundation for our reasoning. Wherever we meet with evil, it must be rejected, even though we may not be prepared to substitute any thing better. But the case is different when we come to legislate for schools. Here the master feels that such institutions must be kept in a state of energetic activity, and fears lest by suppressing an active stimulus, without being able to substitute any thing more desirable, he may only be exchanging a known for an unknown disadvantage. Parents are still more excusable; they have no choice but to place their children in existing institutions, or to educate them at home; and even in giving the preference to the latter plan, can still feel no security that they shall preserve them from the evil of an over-excited self-love. It sometimes happens that a more irritable and more ill-directed vanity is produced by domestic education, than even by such a public one as would seem especially calculated to excite it.

The only thing we can do is to consider the subject in every possible point of view. When the evil is clearly seen, and when its injurious effect on the moral feelings comes to be more dreaded, some means of, at least, diminishing it, will be discovered. Such would be honorary

distinctions, temporary in duration, and attainable by many individuals; like those, for example, which are used in Lancastrian schools. But even these distinctions become dangerous, if the merit of one child be determined by comparing him with his companions, instead of the comparison being made between the progress he himself has made, and that which might have been expected from him. The good effects of example may be strengthened, without exciting a spirit of competition, by frequent promotions to higher classes; or by prizes and other rewards, unlimited in number, and therefore not exclusive. Those who preside over these institutions could not better exercise their talents, than in endeavouring to overcome the difficulties attending this subject.

Any thing like a spirit of rivalry between brothers is in itself so hateful, that children brought up at home should be most carefully preserved from it. The difficulty, then, is to excite sufficient energy; but in proportion as moral education becomes more perfect, and more closely united with intellectual education, this difficulty will be lessened. We have been too little in the habit of accustoming children to consider duty as an active quality; on the contrary, it has generally been represented to them as a barrier, raised to prevent their committing particular actions, or failing in



childhood, will be invigorated by the mutual support they afford each other, and by the exercise which they will find in the various judgments they are called upon to form. Hence will arise a tranquil interest — a gentle and well-regulated impulse, particularly favourable to the calm pleasures of study. Intellectual tastes will grow up, under the fostering shade of a happy disposition — an invaluable advantage! but one of which those children, who have been influenced only by the too powerful stimulus of self-love, are deprived, not only during childhood, but often for a much longer period.

## BOOK III.

PERIOD BETWEEN FIVE AND SEVEN.  

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## CHAPTER I.

ON THE CULTIVATION OF THE INTELLECT; AND  
ON THE BEST MEANS OF EXERCISING THE FA-  
CULTY OF ATTENTION.

IN the former part of this work we have endeavoured to give a picture of the first years of infancy; but as children grow older, it is hardly possible that each successive step in their moral developement should have a precise date assigned to it. Very different results must be produced, even in individuals of the same age, by the inequality both of their natural talents, and of the degree of care bestowed upon them. On this account we must henceforth treat of the various periods of childhood only in general terms; their several characteristics becoming at last so vague and uncertain as not to be distinguished without difficulty.

We cannot, therefore, be surprised that most writers on education have adopted the plan of considering the several branches of the subject.

separately, without any regard to the order of time. By this method they have avoided the necessity of recurring continually to such topics as must be brought forward again and again in each successive period. There are, however, some disadvantages attending this plan. Subjects which should be always uppermost in our thoughts, and which in every change effected by additional years should still harmonize together, are apt to be separately considered, without reference to their mutual connection. It will therefore be our endeavour to avoid this defect, by viewing them as exerting a reciprocal influence. But at the same time we shall often be obliged to take into consideration a somewhat lengthened period, and even then shall seldom be able to determine its exact limits.

The period, then, on which we are now about to offer a few observations, comprehends the interval between five and seven years old. At this time, sympathy, and the imagination which is so closely connected with it, are still in all their force; children have acquired, in the power of speaking, an easy mode of communication with their older friends; but their ideas have not yet been much enlarged by instruction. Their short lessons, which are not considered by them as of much importance, do not seem greatly to favour intellectual progress.

The only valuable acquirements at this age are those which are involuntary; and it is by observing, acting, and entering freely into conversation, that the understanding of children is developed. We shall, therefore, in the first place, consider that species of intellectual culture, which, as regards the end in view, is most important — namely, that which is not obligatory; and shall afterwards examine what advantages may be derived from establishing, even at this early age, some degree of order and method.

The object of the first and principal efforts of intellectual education should be to render children more capable of attention. But this task ought to have been entered upon long before the period of which we are now speaking. Let us for a moment look back to its origin and progress.

When first awakened in the mind the faculty of attention is involuntary; one single vivid sensation will so entirely engross the thoughts as to prevent the reception of any other; thus we often see not only children, but even adults, completely absorbed whilst listening to music, or whilst contemplating some striking object presented to their view. It might seem as if education had no concern with this natural exercise of the attention. But such is not the case. I have already more than once recommended that every

thing about a new-born infant should be kept as quiet as possible, in order that the impressions it receives by means of the senses should be clear and distinct, without its being necessary to make them very powerful. On this preliminary and inferior degree of attention depends that which is to follow; if there have been no involuntary attention, neither will there be any voluntary exercise of this faculty. If the eyes of the child wander about without any fixed object — if he listen inattentively — a degree of vacillation will prevail both in his own existence, and in all his ideas; and this confusion in his perceptions will betray itself in his language.

But, on the other hand, when his sensations are sufficiently lively, his imagination becomes absorbed by the object which has caused them. Recollections, painful or pleasing in their nature, are associated with it; hence arise motives to active exertion; and as soon as there is an end in view, the attention is fixed. If we have not been too careful to preserve our children from the inconveniences incident to physical existence, their own interest will teach them to avoid them; they will feel their way on the floor to secure themselves from falling, and will take care to keep away from the sharp corners of walls, or furniture. But if our fears for them have been so great, as to prevent their

feeling any for themselves, we shall have taken away some of their most powerful motives to exertion, and hope only will remain to be excited.

Fortunately, however, children live almost entirely upon hope, and it affords them an inexhaustible source of activity. Wishing to produce something that will give them pleasure, they imagine to themselves what a pretty garden will be made by the flowers which they stick in the sand, and this pleasing picture excites them to activity. But when they begin to use their faculty of observation, they find that the stalks of the flowers are not sufficiently supported by the sand, but that some stiffer bed is required; and they perceive that if there be a heavy flower at the end of the stalk, the whole plant falls. This leads to an exercise of their reasoning powers; an exercise, however, which would never have taken place, if their imagination had not first represented to them a distinct and pleasing image of the wished-for garden. All their undertakings arise from their desire of realizing mental pictures.

Every spontaneous exercise of the mind, in fact, receives its impulse from the taste, from the interest excited by particular objects, in short, from that craving for pleasure, which seems the only real want experienced by children at this age. Though other motives will, no doubt, act

in time, they do not yet possess strength enough to work by themselves, but require to be brought into play by our means. That which is itself the noblest of all, and which forms the most solid foundation of all our hopes — the feeling of duty — rules at present only through our commands; and it is only from our somewhat artificial teaching, that children learn to attach the idea of merit to certain efforts of the mind. Their time, when they are left to themselves and no tasks are imposed upon them, is allowably devoted to pleasure: but even this time is valuable, and, if it tend to develope agreeable or useful qualities, it is because their ideas of pleasure have, thanks either to our care, or their own natural disposition, taken a happy direction.

In speaking of moral education, we earnestly exhorted mothers to make it their first object to regulate the motives which influence the will, by inspiring such sentiments as will give a desirable tendency to the conduct. And we would now give advice of a similar kind with respect to intellectual education, and would urge them sedulously to cultivate such tastes and interests as will prove exciting motives to the mind. When your children have once learnt to receive pleasure from their own activity, this activity may easily be directed towards such objects as will be most favourable to the end you have in view.

One mistake into which we are very apt to fall, is that of requiring the first efforts of a child's attention, even before it has been exercised in any other way, to be directed to objects totally uninteresting to him. Thus, before we have accustomed him to examine any thing, we desire him to distinguish A from B, from which he cannot possibly derive any pleasure. But, as we have two difficulties to surmount—that of fixing his attention, and that of interesting him in objects not of a nature to afford him any gratification—it would surely be a better plan to undertake them separately. Let us, in the first place, lead children to observe and examine such things as are likely to interest them; as for instance, the innumerable amusing objects in nature, the various parts of flowers, particularly those which have any resemblance to familiar objects, such as boats, hammers, cups, &c.; and afterwards let us exercise their ingenuity and attention by making them point out the representations of these objects in drawings, or engravings. By these preparatory steps the labour of learning to read will be very much facilitated.

The degree of interest taken by children in the objects presented to their observation no doubt varies exceedingly in different individuals. Some will seize with the greatest eagerness on a fact, an object, an idea; they are entirely engrossed by whatever occupies their



attention ; while on others, either from a want of clearness in their ideas, or from a slowness of perception, nothing seems to make any impression ; they neither observe, nor attend ; and their intellect seems shrouded in a thick mist. Yet nature never withholds all her gifts ; and it must be our task to discover, and improve to the utmost, whatever she has bestowed. Though our pupil may be sluggish, heavy, insensible, he is as much entrusted to our care as if he were quick and intelligent ; and we shall be equally responsible for the manner in which we discharge our duty towards him. And though the effect of our care may not be so apparent, it will really be much greater. We shall have contributed still more to the developement of his faculties, from their having required artificial heat to make them expand. Besides, the less pleasing the task of education, the greater becomes the duty, the more urgent the conscientious motives for persevering in our efforts.

We shall soon perceive that, in order to afford an exercise to the minds of children of a slow and confused understanding, material objects are far more useful than purely intellectual ideas. In fact, such is the case with almost all children at this age. Sensible objects are not only more interesting but more useful to them ; general ideas, unless they can in some way

or other be connected with their interests, make no impression ; facts alone seem to them of any importance. But as the examination of sensible objects forms one of the most tranquil and innocent occupations for the curiosity—that powerful stimulus to the intellectual faculties—we cannot do better than direct it to this employment. A volatile attention will be much sooner fixed by any information, whether spoken or written, which is illustrated by visible and tangible objects. The child is no longer a mere passive agent, but takes an active part in what is going on ; either verifying observations already made, or making new ones himself. Both his perceptive and observing faculties are called forth ; while the most we can expect from the study of abstract ideas is that his understanding should assent to them. Even when his attention is engaged, his mind remains passive ; nor can we always be sure that his answers to our questions are more than the effect of memory.

Children who are taught by means of material objects may, perhaps, appear less intellectual, but every thing they possess is really their own ; nor are we liable to be deceived as to the source whence their ideas are derived. We shall soon observe that some objects charm their imagination much more than others, and hence we obtain an indication of their natural

tastes, which is not only valuable as regards intellectual progress, but entirely free from any dangerous tendency, since it is in the power of education either carefully to foster them, or to deny them the culture necessary to their growth.

But how many faults in this respect are constantly committed ! Our very eagerness to encourage these tastes too often only tends to destroy them. Suppose a child, for instance, is fond of drawing ; we begin, perhaps, by gently urging him to devote himself to the occupation ; we try to make him ashamed of giving it up ; he begins to feel a degree of restraint associated with the employment, and his pleasure in it vanishes. Sometimes our over anxiety to afford children the means of indulging their tastes, only produces satiety. If they show an interest in natural history, we immediately overwhelm them with books and engravings ; or we present them with ready-made little collections, and in so doing are almost sure to disgust them. These well-arranged specimens of minerals, &c. with their hard names written on bits of paper, which are on no account to be torn, are soon consigned to some empty cupboard. They are proudly exhibited once or twice, and then completely forgotten ; nor does the hope of finding any thing equally beautiful ever enter the imagination of the little owner.

But if we really desire to encourage, or to

create a taste of this kind, our first endeavour should be to awaken a spirit of research, and to reward its efforts by the pleasure of obtaining the object in question. If you say to your boy, "I am going to look for a certain fossil shell, or mineral, which is to be found on a particular hill—would you like to go with me?" He will be delighted—he will soon discover what you are in search of, and will beg as a favour that he may carry some specimens of it home for himself. The comparison of them, on his return, with descriptions or engravings, will afford him real pleasure; and however little talent he may possess, an impulse will have been given to his mind.

Many applications might be made of this illustration of the subject. There is a fastidious delicacy attendant on these tastes, which flourishes best on a spare diet, and sinks under too great an abundance of nourishment. You may create a taste for science by means of the pebbles in your garden walk, and destroy it by the possession of a museum.

After all, there is nothing so likely to excite these tastes as possessing them ourselves, and associating our child with us in the pleasure we receive from them. The idea that we are constantly occupied about him may excite his gratitude, but will not determine the direction of his inclinations. But if children see that our

interest is awakened, and our curiosity excited by the idea of making some new observation, or ascertaining some new fact, they will soon try to anticipate our discoveries. If they observe us interested in the cultivation of flowers, in watching the labours of the bee, or the metamorphoses of insects, they will soon be delighted themselves with these occupations. Example, emulation, curiosity — the most natural stimulants at an age when pleasure is so vividly enjoyed, and the idea of utility so indistinct — will all act in unison. We often fatigue children by our continual instruction. Believing themselves to be always under tuition, and estimated only by their acquirements, they experience a feeling of restraint, from which they are only too glad to escape.

Their pleasure is entirely derived from the examination of the object presented to them; and the introduction of any other motive only tends to disturb it. Even the praiseworthy desire of pleasing us will sometimes have this effect. Instead of seeking to perform any prominent part ourselves, we should endeavour to keep up the interest which we have succeeded in exciting, without appearing to use any effort for this purpose. The nature of the mind of children, far less complicated in its construction than ours, does not admit of the action of a variety of motives; one single ruling passion

occupies them entirely for the moment: their whole soul is engrossed by one object; and all those stimulants which might be of use at a later period — such as the love of praise, the fear of blame, or a conviction of the utility of science — present to them only so many considerations entirely foreign to the interest by which they are at present absorbed, and serving only to distract their attention. This interest is perfect and entire only when they are so completely engrossed by the object of their examination as to forget both us and themselves; and we may disturb it by the slightest interruption — by a caress, a pleasantry, or even by our praises.

After all, there is nothing in which one mind differs more from another, nothing in which greater individuality is displayed, than in the variety of tastes which we see predominating. The subject which interests us more deeply than any other, may, perhaps, have no charms for our children. But even if they do not receive pleasure from the same exercise of their faculties, they will have learnt from our example to exercise them in some way or other: they will have discovered that this exercise never fails to be productive of pleasure, and will have contracted a habit of investigation which may always be turned to account; and which, having been formed and cultivated amidst physical objects,

will afterwards carry them on with safety through the region of moral ideas.

The period, then, between five and seven becomes particularly valuable, as affording us the means of preparing the child to take an interest in his future studies. Those pure and innocent tastes — from which so much of our happiness arises, which form the firmest barrier against the passions, and even throw a charm over the dry difficulties of science — may be traced to their source in the early amusements of childhood. If the child have never conceived an especial relish for certain objects, which might appear to us but little calculated to please him, he will receive a strong and durable impression from objects of sense alone. Gross pleasures, which have always a reality of existence in their way, and which therefore education has no need to foster, will alone form the subject of his thoughts, and the possession of them will be the sole aim of his intellectual exertions. In youth the call of the passions is loud, and in every age the whispers of vanity are heard; but the volatile imagination of childhood carries up with it in its soaring flight the charm of innocent tastes, and the inestimable comforts which are associated with them.

## CHAPTER II.

ON THE FIRST EXERCISE OF THE REFLECTING  
AND REASONING FACULTIES.

HAVING in the last chapter offered a few observations on the different methods of awakening the attention, we come now to the consideration of the best mode of exercising it. In leading children to the exact observation of facts, we have done something towards the improvement of this faculty; but still this is only a first step. If we would ascertain that this step has been made, and would encourage their farther progress, we must attend carefully to the use they make of their newly-acquired power of speaking; for language is the true medium both of reflection and reasoning. We shall obtain clearer ideas on this subject, if we again pause for a moment, and cast a look back on the ground we have already passed over. Indeed, we can hardly avoid doing this whenever a fresh subject is brought before us; for as the cause of every thing that we observe lies in the past, and its consequences in the future, our views of education can never be confined to any single period of life.



We must recollect that we left children at an age when their minds, as yet incapable of reflection, are occupied by a succession of images. They do, indeed, make use of words in their intercourse with us; but they do not, if I may so express myself, employ them *internally*. Objects themselves, and not the signs by which they are represented, are presented to their minds; a natural consequence of their extreme vivacity, and almost entire want of reflection.

But the use of language is not confined to the communication of ideas. It enables us also to arrest them, to fix them in the memory, and places them, to a certain degree, at our disposal. And hence do children obtain, what constitutes one of the greatest privileges of human nature, the power of commanding their attention. That intellectual education, which, by continually exercising a child in this power, renders him more and more master of it, is indeed of inestimable value; and may be said to favour his moral, as well as intellectual development. Though there can be no doubt of our being able to acquire this command over our attention, we hardly seem aware of the extent of our power in this respect. Yet it is sufficiently proved, by the fact, that an energetic appeal to this faculty is almost always successful. If children can be taught to excite, sustain, and

properly direct it, they will have learnt the secret of acquiring and retaining that authority over themselves, which is too frequently renounced.

The progress which children make in the art of speaking may easily be connected with a spirit of inquiry and examination. Seeking eagerly for sympathy, they are delighted to impart their observations. Every new property in any object which attracts their attention affords an opportunity—which should neither be neglected, nor embraced with too much display of eagerness—of explaining to them the meaning of new terms. But at the same time, though an enlarged vocabulary undoubtedly presents many advantages, it is desirable that the objects we seek to explain should be so familiar that their names may be frequently occurring. If children have felt the want of a particular term before they acquired it, they will soon learn to apply it naturally and correctly; and their minds may then be usefully exercised, by requiring from them a simple, but accurate description of any specified object; so accurate, that we may be able to recognize it without hearing its name. If they mention only such characteristics as are either vague in themselves, or so general that they may be applied indifferently to a variety of objects, we may, by naming one which we are sure is not what they intended to describe, lead them by de-

grees to discover what it is that constitutes real distinction of character. Engravings relating to natural history are very useful as connected with these exercises, because they represent objects sufficiently alike, and yet sufficiently different, to afford examples of nice distinction.

Great pains are sometimes taken to make children into little naturalists by teaching them to know at the first glance representations of animals from distant countries. As an amusing exercise of the imagination, this is all very well; but as an exercise of their intellectual powers, it has no value. We are not surprised when they recognize an individual human face amongst many others; and yet this is, in reality, much more difficult than to distinguish an elephant from a camel. If we wish to inspire them with the true spirit of the science we have in view, they must be required to describe accurately how one species of animal differs from another. But even at the very threshold of education we perceive traces of that system, which attaches far too much importance to mere knowledge, and too little to the developement of the intellect.

A double advantage is obtained by the habit of questioning children; their attention is directed both to the subject of our interrogations, and to the words in which their answers are given. This cannot be done without the

aid of reflection ; and, in fact, reflection is nothing more than an act of the mind, by which it makes observations in order to form judgments, on what passes within itself. Now, when a child is anxious to select proper terms in speaking, he must understand and consider the idea he wishes to express, and it is this reverting of the intellect to its own operations which constitutes reflection.

Many other preparatory exercises of the mind may be connected with the use of language. Thus when a child calls an animal by its name, we may ask him (always taking care that we make use of such expressions as are within the compass of his understanding) how he knows that it is such an animal? whether it be a *thing* or a *quality* by which he distinguishes it? and by this means lead the way to a familiar explanation of the difference between a substantive and an adjective. In this manner the study of grammar, generally rendered so dry and mechanical, might be greatly facilitated.

No doubt children have already acquired some notion of qualities, and consequently of abstract ideas. Even at two or three years old they made use of adjectives, though, of course, without being aware of it, and merely to express their own feelings. And though they may have been led, by our requiring descriptions from them, to pay more attention to the terms they

use, still this has been only a task which they have fulfilled, not a voluntary effort. It is only when they discover that the qualities of an object may alter its future condition (as, for instance, that if the wooden linch-pin of their little cart be broken, it must fall), that they begin to attach any importance to the exact meaning of such words. But after this discovery has been made, they must, almost necessarily, make use of *mental* language. Qualities considered apart from objects, and which can be indicated and understood only by means of words, are now recognized by them as causes ; and the more complicated the connection between cause and effect, the more necessary do they find the use of words in order to explain to themselves what they observe ; in short, they become reasoning persons.

Children of five or six years old do not, in general, possess a habit of reflection ; but this is not because they are incapable of it. I have myself seen a child, not five years old, suddenly become aware of the exercise of his memory. Though from his infancy, constantly acting from its impulse, he had never before been aware of its existence, when one day he suddenly exclaimed, " I am remembering !" and appeared to be absorbed in the contemplation of the past, which was thus presented to his mental vision. Such remarks as these indi-

cate to the instructor the moment for venturing on new experiments, and following up the development of the faculties thus manifested.

The same spirit of observation leads both to the verification of present facts, and to an inquiry into their causes. Perceiving that a change has taken place in some object, the child compares its present with its former state; and endeavours to find out why it has passed from the one to the other. An attentive examination of the circumstances attending the change, may occasionally lead him to the truth; but we must expect his conclusions to be often hasty and incorrect. Not distinguishing sufficiently between necessary and accidental effects, he will often require to be set right. But the wish to understand and explain to himself what he observes is always to be desired, and should be carefully encouraged.

Hence it is that the study of nature, so well calculated to raise the heart of a child to his Creator, possesses such inestimable advantages as regards his intellectual development. Every thing here speaks to his mind, and, by opening his eyes to what is passing around him, gives rise to an innumerable variety of reflections. The different elements, generally so useful, yet at times so terrible to man; the ascent or descent of bodies in the air; the difference in

the apparent size of objects according to the difference in their distance; the regular return of day and night, summer and winter; the beautiful spectacle of the star-bespangled sky; in short, all the charms and wonders of nature, need only to be seen in order to afford a lesson to our pupil, from which his mind must become enlightened and elevated.

But, however the consideration of effects, simply and apart from their causes, may teach children at this age to distinguish and define, they will soon require another exercise. The curiosity, which has been excited by such objects, affords the means of establishing a most valuable intercourse between them and their instructors; in the course of which continual opportunities will arise of favouring a developement of the intellect, proportioned to the age and powers of the pupil, always taking care that no exercise of his mind shall be continued after he has ceased to derive from it any pleasure. He will soon perceive how much knowledge there is for him to acquire; and even this is an important step, for complete ignorance is seldom aware of its own deficiencies. If we find children observing nothing, or expressing no astonishment at what they observe, we can hardly have a stronger proof either of their apathy, or their extreme volatility: and every effort of education should be

directed to the counteracting of these unfortunate dispositions.

Among the innumerable questions proposed by children, there will no doubt be many which we are unable to answer; but, even when this is not the case, we should never, in replying, allow ourselves to enter into lengthened explanations. A word or two will often be sufficient to put them in the right track, and to make them perceive that, with a little reflection, they would have been able to solve the difficulty for themselves; and these few words, seasonably and judiciously sown, may produce in the end valuable fruit. But time must be allowed for the mind thoroughly to digest an idea, before it can derive from it any nourishment. Even in our familiar conversations with our children, we must be careful not to proceed too fast; nor must we take it for granted that, because they comprehend a subject when it is explained to them, they have therefore obtained a knowledge of all its bearings. It is not till they are become perfectly familiar with an idea, that they feel any desire of following it up, and making it the medium of new acquisitions; and till this happens, it is better to let the subject alone, and rather to run the risk of its being forgotten altogether, than to incur the danger of satiating the curiosity, or extinguishing the desire of instruction.

But it is impossible that some degree of



instruction should not result from this method. It may, indeed, be superficial ; but if it be correct, as far as it goes, we ought to be satisfied. A child who can give an accurate definition of a circle, though he may not understand any of its properties, is much more advanced than one who attaches no definite meaning to the word. The knowledge which I would recommend consists only of the materials for reflection, such as children unconsciously acquire for themselves, by guessing, hearing, and observing. All that I propose is, to assist in some degree the progress of nature ; and can any thing be more natural than that a father should converse with his children, and take pleasure in imparting to them his own knowledge ?

We are apt to forget, in our methodical mode of teaching, how much information children learn unintentionally ; and how much advantage is derived from what is thus acquired. A variety of employment excites their moral powers ; but a long continued demand on the attention only wearies and stupifies them ; and, though some degree of application is absolutely necessary, this alone will never give an energetic impulse to the mind.

If we consider the subject in a general point of view, we can hardly doubt that children are endowed with such dispositions as are especially favourable to their moral and physical develop-

ment. They are, indeed, volatile to a fault; far too easily led away by each successive impression, and too completely under the influence of the feelings of the moment. But may we not obtain many useful hints from these very qualities? Do they not point out to us the necessity of taking advantage of every opportunity, and every passing event, in order to

- favour the growth of such dispositions and tastes as we are anxious to encourage? And by so doing, we shall obtain for our children not only a multitude of innocent and interesting occupations, but the simultaneous developement of all the moral faculties. Ideas, at first fluctuating, become stable, and gradually grow up in mutual conformity together.

Acquirements which have been delayed too long always remain in some measure incongruous and disjointed; and though, perhaps, at a more advanced age there may be some advantage in cultivating each branch of instruction separately, or even confining the pupil to one single object, it should be our aim at this early period to endeavour to spread a sort of slight network over the whole surface of knowledge, so as to enclose and connect together its various parts. By opening every channel to the understanding, and causing all the different streams of knowledge to flow through them, we are acting in conformity with the intentions of the Creator; and using the

only means we possess of rendering every other idea subservient to the idea of Him. And in an earthly point of view, we are preparing the way for that spirit of universal knowledge, the demand for which seems the characteristic of the present age.

In some of Miss Edgeworth's stories intended for children, but which ought to be earnestly studied by all mothers, she has recommended, as an excellent exercise for the attention, the examination of such instruments as we are in the daily habit of employing. Children always take a deep interest in watching our use of scissors, pencils, rulers, compasses, &c., particularly if we are employing them in their service; and, by allowing them to assist us in the execution of some object, such as taking the exact measurement of a table, a desk, or even of the house itself (of which we may undertake to make a model according to some fixed proportions), a very agreeable introduction is presented for lessons in arithmetic or geometry. Such a practical commencement gives a substance and reality to theory which is singularly favourable to the success of instruction.

From what has been said, it follows that an examination of material objects forms the most desirable exercise, in the first instance, for the cultivation of the faculty of reflection. In the region of the physical world, every thing is clear,

certain, and palpable to the senses; and hence children acquire here a precision of language, and a solidity of reasoning, which cannot be gained from the expression of moral ideas. Every thing is founded on reality; every word has its individual type in nature; every comparison is made between sensible objects or qualities; and hence the smallest error, either in the value of the terms, or the result of the comparisons is easily detected, and even tends to render these exercises more amusing to children. When they have arrived at a perfectly clear conclusion, the correctness of which has been proved by the success of a practical operation, they feel that they have, by this manner of proceeding, been exercising a double power; and they derive enjoyment from the developement of their moral and physical faculties.

We must never forget that the desire of activity, so natural to children, forms the source of all their most lively pleasures. This is undoubtedly true, though they are not aware of it themselves. They imagine that their enjoyment is derived from some particular object or amusement; while, in reality, it arises from the activity which is thus excited. But, though attributing their pleasure to a wrong cause, they have obtained what they desired, and in seeking for it the powers of their mind are developed.

## CHAPTER III.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE TASTE FOR NATURE AND  
THE ARTS, AS MANIFESTED BY CHILDREN.

Good sense, capacity, and knowledge, are so evidently required for the conduct of human life, that there cannot be two opinions as to the necessity of exercising the reasoning powers of children. Indeed, the importance of instruction in this respect is so universally acknowledged, that the most abundant assistance has been lavished on this part of education; and almost every language abounds in valuable works, in which methodical plans are laid down for the prosecution of each particular study. But they are all silent as to the means of connecting this intellectual progress with those feelings which alone can animate its existence. The reciprocal influence of the mind and heart on each other is universally recognized; yet this influence has never been sufficiently considered in our systems of education, nor have the bearings of all its consequences been properly estimated.

It seems to be generally imagined, that education has nothing to do with the feelings, except to prevent their becoming too powerful. Now, this would be perfectly true if we were

speaking only of that love of self which is so frequently encouraged; but it is not the case with respect to the love of others, and still less so with that love of God, whose peculiar property it is to be able to repress faults, and at the same time to add warmth to the affections.

Besides, it is not enough that such feelings exist, or even that they manifest themselves in actions: they must display themselves also in social intercourse; for it is by this means that they act upon others, and increase their own charms and animation. This is constantly experienced in society, where the power of being agreeable depends more on the feelings than on any other quality. For not only does talent owe to them its greatest energy, and eloquence its irresistible influence, but mediocrity even receives from them a power of pleasing and persuading: they alone are able both to raise the value of a feeble understanding, and to bestow on genius its most fascinating power.

It will not be denied, that the first place must be assigned to the moral and religious feelings. We cannot, indeed, estimate too highly the effect produced on the energy and vigour of the mind by firm principles; on its sagacity and power of discrimination by the habit of searching into the innermost folds of the heart; and on its generous and liberal feelings by a tinge of enthusiasm. I feel, indeed, that these

sentiments are too sacred—that the love of God and of duty are feelings too holy—to be treated of in this place. The subject now under consideration relates to a far inferior, though, at the same time, very important object—the cultivation of the intellectual powers. Religion, morality, dignity of character, require no other motives than what they are themselves able to supply; and it seems a sort of profanation to make use of them to further our particular views. In education, as in every other noble undertaking, they present us with the most certain and efficacious means of obtaining success; yet, to consider them always as means would be lowering their proper value.

But other feelings exist, pleasing and interesting in themselves, which, without seeming so directly connected with religion and morality, exercise a powerful influence on the developement of the mind. Amongst these, there is one, which, on a first view, appears so far above the reach of children at this early age, that I am almost afraid of naming it; I allude to a taste for the beautiful. Accustomed to attribute to this feeling all the exquisite pleasure we derive from nature and art, we are unwilling to recognize it in what seems to us the ridiculous delight which children receive from a thousand frivolous objects. But we deceive ourselves in yielding to this unjust feeling of contempt; and, influenced

by an arrogant assumption of superiority, we refuse to acknowledge one of the noblest gifts of heaven, because it is concealed under a childish form.

Yet these emotions, so entirely unconnected with the preservation of physical existence, afford the strongest proofs of heavenly origin; and, from their never being felt by the inferior animals, seem to ratify our claim to a higher rank of beings. It is perfectly natural that education should, in an especial manner, attend to the cultivation of these high attributes, which are peculiar to man; and she ought to rejoice when she perceives them already displaying themselves in the child.

Why, then, should not the faculty of admiration, so lively at this early age, and the disposition to enjoy such pleasures as are completely unconnected either with physical instincts or selfish vanity, be assiduously cultivated? Perhaps it may be said that it would be better to delay this cultivation, till the admiration can be exercised on objects more deserving of its attention. But, without stopping to inquire how such objects are to be distinguished, I assert, that by so doing, we shall run great risk of stifling the disposition altogether. If we refuse our sympathy to the only feelings of admiration which can be really experienced by children, they will soon learn to be ashamed of them, and,



forsaking them, will return to coarser pleasures.

Yet the noble nature of this faculty is manifested, even as it displays itself in children! and we may already remark how much purer is its source than that which gives rise to physical enjoyments. Give a child a cake, and no doubt he will be pleased; he may even show some degree of emotion; but there is nothing of gaiety in the eagerness with which it is devoured. But present him with some amusing object, or toy, and his joy will burst forth in exclamations, or animated gestures; and all around him will be called upon to partake in his delight. The faculty of admiration tends to expand and ameliorate the heart; it is a social, even a religious, feeling, leading us to harmonize with our fellow-creatures, and elevating our thoughts to God.

A taste for what is beautiful will, moreover, prepare the mind for that contemplative disposition, with which so many brilliant and excellent qualities may be associated. The vivacity of children at this age is so great, and their attention so much absorbed by outward objects, that as yet they show little tendency to this disposition. But we see from the pleasure they have in expressing their feelings, that the impressions they receive are not unnoticed by them; and, by leading them to describe these

impressions, we accustom them to reflect on their own sensations, and to enter, occasionally, into their own minds.

It is true that their taste and ours do not at all agree; and that what excites their admiration very often has no charms for us. Their pleasures are all derived from sensation; they are pleased with a decided contrast of lively colours; or their imagination is struck by some solitary, brilliant, object; but they seldom take general views. They have no idea either of harmony, or infinity; and therefore receive no pleasure from any thing which either fades away in colours delicately shading off, or is lost in the vagueness of distance. When we speak of beauty, taken in its most enlarged sense, we mean, by the term, a general impression, a whole, created in our minds by the contemplation of the objects of our admiration. But with children, the general effect passes unobserved, and the details only arrest their attention; and hence we have no difficulty in discovering why their admiration is seldom excited by rural scenery. Yet they do already receive from it many pleasures; and are thus, unconsciously, becoming capable of feeling, at some future period, the whole force of its charms. The imitative arts better suit the present state of their imagination; but even these must be expressly adapted to their taste; they have a

theory peculiar to themselves, and whatever is bright and gay, is to them beautiful. It is ornamented, not beautiful nature, which they admire. This is well understood by the makers of toys; they know that gilded coaches, brightly coloured figures, imitations far more splendid than the original models, are what delight young children. And why should they not be allowed to have their own fine arts? If we require from the sculptor, the painter, and even the poet, to produce for us those pleasing impressions which are so seldom afforded by real life, and to make them at the same time both more striking in their effect, and more frequent in their occurrence, why should not children be permitted to exercise the same privilege? and why should not the arts be made to correspond to their natural emotions, as well as to the inmost feelings of our souls?

As the pleasure of children consists almost entirely in activity, they are much more delighted with little images, figures in relief, or any detached objects, which they can move about and arrange as they like, than with mere pictures. Every thing about them partakes of a dramatic character. The first poetry which they relish, is that which describes actions. To morality and reflections they are entirely indifferent. But poetry and music combined, in all their primitive simplicity; heroic and warlike

narratives sung to simple but striking airs, will excite in the youngest children transports of joy—energy—even inspiration. And I am astonished that so agreeable and certain a method of inspiring generous sentiments and a noble enthusiasm is not more frequently employed.

We often treat with contempt the delight expressed by children, and thus wither in the bud their feelings of admiration, from a false and absurd notion that we should encourage only a chaste and correct taste. But in what does such a taste consist? In a delicate sense of propriety—a correct estimate of proportions—a nice perception of harmony—and how can such a taste have been acquired by children? Your censures, far from creating the elements of good taste in their minds, will only tend to destroy those agreeable sensations which might have contributed to its formation. If they are allowed to admire nothing but what is justly entitled to admiration, they will consider only what judgment they are expected to form; their impressions will no longer be pure and tranquil; and, in order to be more certain that they are right, they will endeavour to read in your countenance what they ought to feel.

Let us, then, be very careful not to throw any restraint over the enjoyments of children, but allow them freely to abandon themselves to the

simple impressions natural to their age; and above all let us never endeavour to shackle them by the imposition of our own ideas. If we oblige them to find beauty, where for them it has no existence, we produce only an affectation, by which all their natural impulses will be restrained. Besides, their pleasure does not really arise from bad taste. What they admire is pretty in itself, though it may be faulty in its proportions, and may not be a correct representation of any real object. Their present enjoyment is derived from the most simple of all concords—an agreeable sensation united to a pure pleasure—but from a combination of such concords, the most beautiful harmony will, in time, be produced.

On this account, I am not disposed to agree with Mrs. Hamilton, when, in her valuable work on education, she finds fault with the too frequent use made by nurses of the word *pretty* to children. She wishes that, as soon as the beauty of any object has arrested their attention, their thoughts should be directed to its utility, by an explanation of its various advantages and properties. It is all very well to excite their interest about these things, if it be possible. All I entreat is, that they may also be allowed to enjoy, for one moment, the pleasure arising from mere simple beauty. Our Heavenly Father himself loves beauty, and has

not, without some motive, adorned the flowers and birds which He has created with such brilliant colours. In all the prodigal luxury of beauty diffused over the face of nature, there is, no doubt, a secret purpose of leading our thoughts to Him.

It is our earnest wish to preserve children from vanity and frivolity; innumerable little stories have been written with this view and, as far as vanity is concerned, this is perfectly right. But how distinct is the love of what is beautiful, arising solely from our internal sensations, from the feeling of vanity, which thinks of nothing but the opinion of others! And as to frivolity, it is not easy to define what is meant by the word; every thing in human existence, which is not absolutely necessary, may be called frivolous. The wishes of each successive age appear frivolous to those who have passed on to the next period; and the time will come when every thing, which has not contributed to promote the only true object of our existence, will so appear to us.

If by useless, is meant that which does not lead to the end, whatever it may be, which we have proposed to ourselves, a child may be easily made to understand that an object which is only pretty, is of no use but to be looked at; and that if he spoil it, the single purpose for which it was intended is destroyed. He will

soon learn to prefer more solid and useful playthings, such as may be employed in various ways, and safely handled and moved without danger of being spoiled or broken. In this way we may lead him to prefer utility, without throwing any restraint over his feelings, or incurring the risk of hereafter contradicting ourselves. If, after we have talked much to him on the subject, and taken great pains to make him despise every thing that is useless, we wish him to learn music, and, discouraged by its difficulties, he asks what is the use of it, how shall we answer him?

If we had the power of determining at what precise moment each successive developement should take place, it would be perfectly right to begin with what is indispensable. But this is not the case. The manifestation of the faculties is governed by an order, which is not, as it would seem to us, required by absolute necessity. If the proper chords have not been struck before a certain age, they can never afterwards be made to vibrate. How many people do we continually meet with, who observe nothing — feel nothing — and are totally incapable of receiving any lively or original impressions! Cold, dry, and calculating — they fatigue us by the monotony of their opinions, and all their determinations are influenced either by their vanity, their interest, or their party spirit; we

know beforehand what they will think or feel: their hearts never beat in unison with ours; nor are they ever moved by that instantaneous sympathy which would unite us even to an enemy. Should we not, then, endeavour to cultivate in our children that sensibility, the want of which deprives us both of an abundant source of happiness, and a powerful means of pleasing?

The perception of what is beautiful, like the faculty of reason, is more easily developed by means of objects than of ideas; and if we engage children to describe the impressions they receive from them, a natural transition is made from one of these exercises to the other: the object of their examination is material, but in the attempt to define sensations, their occupation becomes in some degree a literary one. After having been exercised for some time in this manner, they will begin to receive pleasure from written descriptions; they will have acquired an interest both in nature itself, and in such works of the imagination as afford descriptions of its beauties.

It has always been considered one part of a complete education to render the pupil capable of enjoying the pleasure derived from the fine arts. But the happiness arising from a sense of the beauties of nature is so great, that the cultivation of this taste ought to form a prominent



object in every system of education. Nothing is more easy than to create it: in fact, every thing would seem to have been prepared on purpose for its formation and encouragement. The most delightful objects are offered to our view on all sides, and by means of sympathy children may soon be taught to appreciate them; for if you sympathize in their pleasures, they will soon learn to associate themselves in yours. If you have shown an interest in what pleases them, if you have observed with them all the particulars which have especially attracted their notice, you may by degrees lead them to more enlarged views — to the admiration of beauty *as a great whole*. The rainbow with all its lively colours; the masses of cloud edged with gold; the sun setting over the wide ocean; in short every thing in creation calculated to excite their admiration, should be carefully pointed out to them. The more their attention is directed to the forms, the sounds, the colours, of the scene around us, the more evidently will they perceive the innumerable sources of pleasure prepared for us by Divine Goodness; the more will their minds be elevated, and their hearts opened to religious impressions.

## CHAPTER IV.

## DEVELOPEMENT OF THE SOCIAL QUALITIES.

WE have still some observations to offer on this second period of infancy, before we enter on the more serious and obligatory part of education. What particularly distinguishes the interval between the ages of five and seven, is, that it presents a sort of neutral ground on which the primitive instincts of infancy are encountered by the new-born faculty of reason. Infancy, as it passes away, beholds manhood approaching in the distance. Hence it is, that this period is of all others the most favourable for preserving all that is desirable of the dispositions of the earliest age, by uniting them with those which succeed. We have already shown how we may avail ourselves of the faculties of sympathy and imagination, in order to create a spirit of examination and a taste for nature and the fine arts. We shall now proceed to point out the advantages to be derived from these faculties in that, no less important part of intellectual education, which has for its object the developement of the social qualities. But, when we have to treat of our conduct

towards our fellow-creatures, the education of the mind and heart become so closely united, that it is hardly possible to separate them; and in directing our children we must take advantage of the double light afforded by sentiment and reason.

We have already remarked in what an extraordinary manner our feelings seem to be understood by infants, even while yet in the cradle. The impression produced on them by the human countenance is one of the most remarkable effects of instinct; but of an instinct extremely evanescent in its nature, and often succeeded by an almost total indifference as to any fatigue or trouble they may occasion to others. Some traces of it may still be perceived in the very decided liking or aversion, which they evince for particular individuals. Their judgment, always biassed by a degree of self-regard, depends on the dispositions which they discover in others towards themselves; and they soon learn to turn such discoveries to their own advantage. Seeking, not only to free themselves from all control, but even to domineer over others, they understand exactly how far they may venture with different persons; and, whilst they are good and obedient with their parents, will be wilful, obstinate, and capricious with their nurses. I have seen a little girl assume three or four different characters ac-

cording to the persons she was with; and this not from hypocrisy, but merely from the impulse of the moment.

This quickness of perception in children, forms the commencement of a species of knowledge, which, arising at first from instinct, may easily become an intellectual quality. By frequently questioning children as to what they have discovered of the sentiments of particular individuals, we lead them to direct their attention to the feelings of others, and are thus conferring upon them a great benefit. Were the art of reading the countenance more practised, it would soon put an end to all affectation, and exaggerated pretensions. It would lead people to pause in time, before they made use of expressions, either useless in themselves, or calculated to give offence. When a person is spoken of as tiresome, tedious, or anxious to show off his own good qualities; we may be assured he is deficient in that most valuable quality, the faculty of observation.

There is a sort of benevolent sagacity, which may be termed an *instinct for our neighbour*; a sort of sympathetic faculty, by which our feelings seem to be transferred into the soul of others, and to repel, or receive, every thing for them. This instinct is indispensable to the character of a woman: and the man who wants it must always be deficient in tact. But it

cannot be cultivated without the assistance of that sympathy, which we too frequently allow to perish from neglect.

Whence is it that children so often manifest a degree of shy timidity almost amounting to rudeness? That they have such an aversion to strangers, and feel so much restraint in their presence? These questions cannot be answered without some degree of reproach being thrown upon education, as in great measure the cause of these effects.

In order to give more weight to the innumerable injunctions with which we overwhelm children, we are accustomed to appeal to the opinions or authority of others, we are continually repeating, "What will people say if you behave, or speak, in that manner? If any one were to enter the room now, what would they think of your appearance?" &c. &c. After such admonitions as these, can we be surprised that children should dread the appearance of these supposed severe censors?

If there were no other reason why this mode of correction should be avoided, the consideration that it will influence children only when they are in society — that it will have no effect on their conduct when they are alone, — ought to be sufficient to deter us from making use of it. How do children, in other matters, find out what is displeasing to those around

them? Most likely from an inward feeling of what is disagreeable to themselves; a feeling, of which we might make use on many other occasions. A natural taste for order and elegance — the indirect consequence of that love of the beautiful, which is so often entirely free from any personal consideration — is inherent in our breasts. Let us take advantage of this by making children, especially little girls, take an active part in some occupation requiring an exercise of their taste; such as arranging a jar of flowers, or the furniture in the room, or the plants in the garden; let us accustom them to wish every thing to be placed in the best manner possible, and this wish will naturally and innocently extend itself to their own appearance; and will influence their countenance, their manner, and their actions, both when they are alone and when they are in company.

But we should most particularly avoid making children anxious as to the opinion of others, where our object is to cultivate a really social disposition. Nothing tends so much to throw a restraint over their actions, as the idea that all their movements are watched and criticised. Either their vanity is excited, by the hopes they entertain of being admired; or an awkward constraint takes possession of them, and their fear of being blamed makes their

wishes extend only to exemption from reproach.

Mutual good will forms the only tie between the beings whom God has created, and the only true social spirit arises from benevolence. The same feeling which, under the name of philanthropy, carries the light of civilization to distant regions, and under that of Christian charity relieves misery, corrects vice, and diffuses every where the blessings of religion, may be exercised even on the most trifling occasions, and may be displayed in a narrow circle of society as well as in a more enlarged one. Though we may not have any general control over the fate of others, we may, by the exercise of this feeling, render happier those moments of their lives over which we have any influence. Free from all self-interested views, it forbids us either to make use of any low motives in our endeavours to please our fellow-creatures, or to contribute to their temporary gratification at the sacrifice of their eternal interests. If, instead of a selfish desire of admiration, we could inspire children with a wish to oblige others, we should be much more certain to make them agreeable, and the effect on the heart would be far more desirable. Those very faults which so often annoy us in their manners frequently arise from their feeling ill at ease ; from the want of an inward impulse, from the fear of blame, and from

their feeling unable to do anything deserving of praise. All their native charms are destroyed by their anxious solicitude as to the effect they may produce.

The great disadvantage under which children labour is, that, conscious of their weak and dependent state, they feel how few means they possess of rendering themselves agreeable to older people. Services, trifling in themselves, and of a merely physical nature, are all of which they are capable. But even these should be desired and encouraged: nothing which can possibly influence the direction of the thoughts should be considered unimportant in education. Teach your child to be on the watch to show some little attention to a visiter. The offer of a screen, or a chair, any act of courtesy, however trifling, will establish a pleasing and friendly connection between them. The child will imagine that he has conferred an obligation, which he could never have supposed he had done by making the finest bow in the world; his countenance will expand, and his benevolent feelings be excited. Nor is he always mistaken in supposing that he has given pleasure; for so great are the charms of this age, that we are touched and affected by the slightest mark of prepossession, and the merest trifles please in those who have nothing greater to offer.



But in the domestic circle something more than this is to be desired. Children should be early accustomed to feel and to understand what is passing around them. Innumerable opportunities of developement are lost by the habit of not attending to what is going on; they become listless and idle, and, consequently, troublesome. But, by encouraging them at times to express their own thoughts, others would be excited in their minds, and they would, very probably, become less indifferent to the fear of wearying their parents, did they more frequently enjoy the pleasure of interesting them.

We are too apt to forget that what is most important is not always the easiest, and that it may often be delayed for a time without any disadvantage. We say, "let us, in the first place, prevent our children from being troublesome, and afterwards try to make them agreeable. Let us first teach them to be just, and afterwards to be generous." All this would be very well if the developement of their different faculties were governed by the laws of general utility; but, unfortunately, this is not the case. Nothing but the pleasure of displaying a kind feeling, can make up to them for the loss of noise and activity; nothing but the gratification of being able to give something themselves, console them for the loss of an object which afforded them amusement. Their existence cannot re-

main inactive ; it must expand in some direction or other ; and, hence, we often find it easier to obtain from them a great sacrifice than a more trifling one, if the former require active exertion, and the latter involve only a simple privation.

One of the first effects of a benevolent disposition is shown by the pleasant manner in which children reply to the questions addressed to them by older persons ; and, surely, an effect so agreeable deserves to have its cause sought for and encouraged.

A mother should sedulously endeavour to make herself agreeable to her children ; to make herself at times their companion, without thinking it necessary to be always moralizing, reproving, or even instructing them. By conversing openly and freely with them, she will both form and expand their minds, and impart to them some of her own feelings ; and an opportunity is thus afforded her of obtaining a clearer insight into their character, and a better idea of the best mode of influencing them. To listen patiently to children, — to enter into the originality of their ideas, — to discover the meaning which is often concealed under their whimsical expressions, — to sympathize in their imagination, and, if we can do so without compromising our dignity and good sense, to display something of this quality ourselves, — such are the

means by which we are most likely to succeed in rendering our children agreeable.

If they fancy that we are amusing ourselves with them really for our own gratification, they are delighted; a thousand lively sallies escape from them, and ideas are elicited from their minds, which we should never have suspected of existing there, and which, very likely, did not previously exist, but arose from the impulse of the moment. What a mistaken austerity that is, which would teach us to look upon the art of conversing agreeably as useless and trifling! How is it possible to undervalue the pleasing qualities of the mind, when we observe how much they contribute to the diffusion of innocent pleasure? Do we not see that at the recital of an interesting anecdote, or a striking circumstance, the old, the sick, even the afflicted, throw off for a moment the burden of their painful existence, and are won to forget their sorrows by the effect of that happy art, which can invest the most trifling details of every-day-life with grace and interest?

For the cultivation of much more useless talents, we supply children with masters in abundance; but for that of conversation, — the most charming of any, — the most frequently called into exercise, — and the one which seems more than any other to belong peculiarly to the individual, we take no pains whatever. We

cannot, indeed, at this very early age, do more than prepare the way for its future cultivation ; but something might be done by education towards this preparation. In the imagination of children, which bestows life upon every object, and brings every thing into action ; and in that disposition — so rarely to be met with in older persons — which leads them to choose the subjects and colouring of their pictures from nature, rather than from social life, there is much that might be cultivated with great future advantage.

But even when they are most agreeable, let us beware of praising children on this account. No sooner is their self-love excited, than all their natural charms vanish, and are superseded by pretension and affectation. A judicious mother will reserve her commendations for the virtuous efforts of the will, and not lavish them on graceful manners, a sprightly sally, or even a display of feeling. Nothing has any real merit in her eyes which has not been obtained at the expense of some sacrifice. Let her show that she has received an agreeable impression from any thing her children have said or done, and the idea that they have either amused her or touched her feelings will be sufficient encouragement. A smile, or a caress, will be considered an ample reward for a *bon-mot*, or a sensible remark.

There is another reason why the faculty of

sympathy in children so soon loses much of its power. We are too frequently in the habit of adopting, especially towards boys, a tone of contemptuous familiarity, and of permitting our gaiety to degenerate into rudeness. Unable to distinguish what is intended for pleasantry from what is meant to be serious, — humiliated by the idea that they are treated with ridicule, — half-offended, and little disposed to be amused, — they experience at times a bitter feeling, which is only aggravated by our afterwards insulting their wounded pride. Nothing can be more injurious than this kind of bantering; we should either joke with them openly and fairly, or talk to them sensibly, as to our equals; this not only pleases them, but seems to inspire them with a presentiment of moral dignity.

To preserve peace and harmony amongst a number of young children constitutes one of the greatest difficulties of education, and we almost always find that when this is accomplished, it is in those families where a general tone of gentleness and politeness prevails. If children are treated in a joking manner by their parents, they do not venture to reply to them in the same style; but they make amends to themselves for this forbearance, and for the vexation they have felt, by exercising a spirit of bantering towards their brothers and sisters; and possessing no tact, their raillery is perfectly un-

restrained, and devoid both of taste and good feeling. Having once acquired this habit, their teachers will hereafter be the objects of their ridicule; the spirit will spread itself through a whole class of pupils, and the best fruits of education may by this means be destroyed.

Children are for the most part so disposed to be contented with their lot, that they generally bear with cheerfulness those natural privations, the disadvantages of which they are fully able to understand. We find even the blind, the lame, and the deaf and dumb, quite as happy as other children, provided they are not exposed to humiliating comparisons.

In considering the effects produced on children by the instinct of imitation, we may observe that it acts most powerfully where the greatest approach to equality exists in their present or future destinations. Therefore, although it is always more prudent to suppose the existence of danger from example, this danger is in reality far from being equally great in all cases. When we reflect how continually they come in contact with servants, we might naturally imagine that children would be inclined to follow their example. But, generally speaking, they seldom take as models those who differ much from them either in age or situation. Their several masters, however much they may be prepossessed in favour of their own peculiar talents,

seldom succeed in imparting their own moral impressions to their pupils. Children soon understand how to make allowance for professional prejudice, or the personal interest which they impute to those who harangue them. And hence it is, that we ourselves, notwithstanding the equality of rank, and reciprocity of affection, existing between us and our children, labour under some disadvantages from our vocation as parents. They feel that it is our duty to reprove, and theirs to listen with an air of submission, and that both parties are continually called upon to act the same parts over and over again.

On the other hand, the dominion which children exercise over each other is almost unbounded. Whatever may be the difference in their future destination, it vanishes before their present community of feeling and equality of situation. Their influence over each other must therefore be either very dangerous or highly useful; and by obtaining the direction of it, we secure to ourselves the advantage of a most powerful instrument in education.

This circumstance accounts for the continually increasing success of infant schools. In these institutions a sort of reciprocal moral instruction takes place. Order, exactness, obedience, truth, justice, civility, are communicated from one child to another by the force of ex-

ample; and from the external imitation of these qualities, a real feeling of them is soon produced. And in the same manner, as regards their lessons, it is often possible to fix the attention of a number of children upon objects, in which it would have been very difficult to interest a single child. Every subject of examination which is proposed to them becomes a sort of earnest amusement, and engages their whole attention; and the interest which one child begins to take in it is communicated to all.

Though we are not able to make the same use of the powerful influence of example in domestic education, we possess immense resources in the strong mutual affection of parents and children; and were these all brought into action, we have every reason to suppose that the good effects—especially in the early years of childhood—of that divine institution, a family, would far surpass those of the most perfect human institution.



## CHAPTER V.

## ON THE ADVANTAGE OF REGULAR LESSONS.

IN order to avoid the danger of adopting erroneous systems of education, we should constantly bear in mind the conditions essential to the undertaking. What must we do to insure our success? We must in the first place give our attention to the child, as such, and in the next prepare him for his future state of manhood. But from these two conditions a third necessarily arises; that of cultivating such qualities as, by giving us a hold upon him, will afford us hereafter the means of influencing his character. He must thus be considered under three different points of view: as the present child, the future man, and as in a state of transition from one of these characters to the other; that is, as the pupil to be educated.

What then does a child, in his natural state, without any reference to the future, require? Activity, enjoyment, liberty. A child devoid of gaiety is like spring without sunshine, or a butterfly without wings. He possesses none of that elasticity of mind which both arises from his

bodily health, and tends to preserve it. He should also be endowed with such feelings of kindness and affection as will procure for him the assistance which his present want of strength requires. From a consideration for his own safety, arises the necessity of obedience, without which he cannot be preserved from danger; and from his eager pursuit of pleasure spring innumerable opportunities of intellectual developement, all tending to multiply his sources of enjoyment. But he feels no need of such instruction as exacts a certain amount of study; he does not wish for it, and the trouble necessary for its acquisition appears to him useless.

And, indeed, even as regards the future, sedentary occupations, such as lessons, may not at first sight seem necessary at this early age. It is an acknowledged fact, that a healthy child of seven years old would be able to learn in one year all that other children, of the same age, had been four years in acquiring. But, though I do not deny the truth of this assertion, experience proves that the child of seven years old, who has hitherto been entirely untaught, will not often be found in a teachable disposition; and this fact is worthy of our serious attention.

It was formerly too much the custom in every system of education to consider only the future man; and the consequence was that the child was nothing but a pupil, overwhelmed with stu-

dies, and treated with harshness ; and unless nature, owing to the fortunate negligence of instructors, regained her rights by stealth, the strength of the young plant was prematurely exhausted, and it became weak and unhealthy.

Rousseau however effected a beneficial change in this respect, and procured for children the restitution of their rights. But his admirers ran into the opposite extreme. Following, or imagining they followed, the plan laid down in *Emile*, they entirely neglected the formation of the character ; their pupils became indeed men ; but rude, ungovernable, and totally unfit to live with their fellow men.

The disadvantages of this plan were so great and so apparent, that a remedy was necessarily sought for ; and as the old road had already been condemned, some middle path was to be struck out. By retaining the principle of governing children only by the laws of their own free will and pleasure, yet at the same time taking care to bestow upon them, unknown to themselves, those rudiments of instruction which were found to be indispensable, it was imagined that a happy method had been devised of reconciling the two systems. Hence arose a multitude of little inventions and stratagems for communicating knowledge to children under the disguise of amusement. But, besides the deficiency of this system in many other respects,

it was wanting in what is absolutely essential to the success of every plan — truth.

By pretending to have an end in view which is not our real object, we lose both the respect and love of children. Suppose, for instance, a mother wishes to commence the instruction of her child by teaching him to read. How does she set about the task? Having made her preparatory arrangements, she tells him that she has got a new and amusing game to show him. Coloured ivory counters, pictures of animals, or flowers on cards, smart gay-looking books, are produced to captivate his imagination. For a time he is completely the dupe of all this artifice; and, as long as the attraction of novelty remains, comes with eagerness to his lesson. But in a little while he finds it more entertaining to vary the sounds of the different letters, and when A is pointed out to him, will call it O; or he will amuse himself with performing some feat of agility between the naming of each letter, or will choose rather to build houses with the cards than put them to their proper use. His mother, wishing to preserve the idea of amusement, and yet at the same time to accomplish the end she has in view, endeavours, with an ill-assumed gaiety, to recall his wandering attention; but he sees through her purpose, and while taking care to frustrate it, derives entertainment from her vexation; and a dis-

position most deplorable in itself, but the inevitable consequence of such a system of deception, is thus fostered. Declare openly your intention of teaching, and the child soon submits; — his respect for you is even augmented; but if you try to deceive him with a false pretext, he will cling to your pretended object with determined obstinacy, and will oblige you to preserve your consistency by making that really an amusement which you announced as such.

These remarks will equally apply to the various instructive games which have been invented for children of every age with the intention of lessening the difficulties of learning. As I have before asserted, the most essential point is, in the first place, to inspire children with such tastes as will lead them to derive pleasure from their studies; and, in the next, to give them that command over themselves which will render them capable of application even to subjects in which their taste is not interested. But by having recourse to games for instruction, both these objects are lost. The interest of the child is engrossed, not by the subject on which it is intended that he should be instructed, but by his hopes and fears as to the result of the game; and the volatile gaiety inspired by this amusement is far from being a desirable state of mind for receiving instruction. But as it is our wish to accustom children to fix their attention even

on objects not likely at first to interest them, and to give them a habit of rational and serious application, we should, instead of sparing them every difficulty, require from them a degree of effort proportionate to their strength. In this case, the means are of more consequence than the end; and application without any result is of far more use than result obtained without application.

Besides, why should the sacrifices which duty often requires from us in this world be concealed from children? Why deceive them into a persuasion that life is only a series of pleasures? Will they, by this means, be better prepared for encountering its trials? Let us not present either virtue or learning to them with any false embellishments; let them appear in all their natural charms, rendered still more apparent by our own evident appreciation of them; and if we add to these our approbation, our esteem, our confidence, we shall find that we are pursuing the only path which leads to the end we have in view, and at the same time affords a correct idea of the condition of human life.

It is almost always injurious to hold out the promise of pleasure in education; we are not certain of being able to fulfil the promise; and even when we can do so, the previous expectation of it tends to diminish the actual enjoyment. Bestow on your children as much pleasure

as you please, but do not talk about it. It is good, and even necessary for them; tending as much to the support of their moral energy as food does to their physical strength. Let there be pleasures — well chosen ones — in abundance; but do not give them an artificial value, nor let them occupy the thoughts of children too constantly. If they have been always accustomed to consider pleasure as the great end of life, it will not be an easy task to substitute the idea of duty as their proper object. Leave instinct to its natural course, and do not purposely augment its power by the avowed assent of the will.

There is, no doubt, more truth in the prospect which is sometimes held out to children of the pleasure they will hereafter receive from scientific pursuits. The evil, however, is that they are not yet capable of appreciating this pleasure. Ignorant of any future beyond that of the approaching hour, they have no idea of ever wanting any thing: knowledge, fortune, every thing will, they imagine, naturally become theirs when they become men. "I know I must learn to read," says a child, "but why must I begin to-day? why will not to-morrow do as well? or this evening instead of this morning?" And he perhaps adds that one of his companions, who is much taller than he is, has not yet learnt any thing. What answer will you make to these remonstrances?

Perhaps you will talk to him of the entertaining stories which he likes so much to hear, and which he will be able to read to himself when he has once learnt ; but he hardly comprehends how there can be a story in a book ; and at any rate he can do without stories, but not without running, leaping, and perpetual bodily activity. It is all very well, he says, for his father, if it amuse him, to pass whole hours in looking at a book full of black and white lines, but it would give him no pleasure.

Thus reasons the child ; and not without having some justice on his side ; enough at any rate to give him frequently the advantage in argument. But there is one still more baneful system sometimes adopted ; that of working on the sensibility of children, and endeavouring to persuade them to application, by adopting a pathetic tone of entreaty ; or an air of sentimental grief on their refusal. It is possible that such a method may succeed once or twice ; but it must in the end be totally inefficacious ; and its only effect will be to distress ourselves, by instilling doubts as to the affection of our children. Yet it is not that they are naturally unfeeling, but that we have done our best to make them so.

Nothing is so likely to destroy the affection of a child as a display of grief in which he cannot sympathize : it is impossible that he



should understand the pleasure which you receive from his application to his lessons ; your distress therefore is all wasted upon him ; considering it as unreasonable, he will soon become indifferent to it, and even doubt its sincerity. Should he once imagine you capable of hypocrisy, you will have lost all hold upon him, and will soon perceive how much you have sunk in his esteem. •

I have been induced to dwell rather at length on this first branch of instruction, because these remarks will equally apply to any other ; for whatever may be the study in which you wish to interest your child, your motives will be the same ; referring either to his present pleasure, which he denies altogether ; or to his future benefit, of which he is not able to form any idea, and in which he takes no interest ; or lastly, to his affection for yourself, which will easily be destroyed, if made an object of speculation as a source of practical advantage. The same difficulties will constantly be encountered, and the same necessity of obedience constantly felt ; and when you are at last compelled to have recourse to authority, what can you expect but opposition from your child as soon as he becomes aware of your inconsistency ?

The longer we delay the task of conquering the difficulty which attends the commencement

of a regular method of instruction, the more arduous does it become. Perhaps the best plan of all would be to begin before it were possible that the child should have learnt to associate any unpleasant ideas with the name of lesson. Even at two or three years old, it would be very possible to give a sort of amusing lesson, by making children imitate the noises of different animals, point out particular objects in prints, pronounce a given word distinctly, distinguish different colours, count up to a certain number, and various other exercises of this kind, occupying only a few minutes at a time. If an act of obedience have been obtained, performed at a given hour, and exacted by the mother with a gentle seriousness of manner, whatever may have been its object, it is enough; let the custom be once established, and the way will be smoothed for every kind of instruction.

But even should this most favourable age — when every thing is comparatively easy — have been allowed to pass by, there still remains one resource. Declare to the child your determination to give him a lesson at a certain fixed time; and in the intervening period let your intentions be made still more evident by a display of preparation for the occasion. He will most likely feel too much indifference on the subject to think in the first instance of offering any opposition; and afterwards will consider

this as in some measure out of the question; from his previous knowledge of your design. By following this method with regard to any new subject of instruction, we forestal any objection on the part of our children; for no regulation appears arbitrary when it is to be put in force only at some future time.

To a judicious and tender mother, the pleasure of her children must of course always form an important object; but while she endeavours to render their lessons as agreeable to them as possible, she adheres steadily to her plan, neither drawn aside by the amusement or weariness she may produce, nor allowing herself to be discouraged by what she knows to be mere floating impressions.

Children delight so much in manual occupations, that it is always a fortunate circumstance when we are able, at the commencement of our instruction, to connect these with their other employments. By making them copy on a slate the letters we show them; giving them names to place under pictures, or a number of mixed words to be arranged in some particular order (as, for instance, according to the first letter or syllable of each); in short by endeavouring, in every way, to let them have visible traces of their mental exercises, we render learning pleasant not only to children of this age, but to older ones.

We cannot however always make use of these resources : some studies must be purely intellectual. In such cases a very few minutes at a time should in the first instance be devoted to the subject. A moderate degree of application is rather beneficial than injurious to the health of children. The connection between body and mind is so intimate, that whatever acts as a stimulus to the one will necessarily affect the other also. But let us not call in the assistance of a master ; his lessons, if lasting only half an hour, are too long. The leisure which a mother generally has at her command, the power she possesses of recurring to the same subject two or three times in the course of the day, and the tact with which she perceives and even anticipates any symptoms of weariness, are all required in order to success in this species of teaching. But at the same time she must be careful to fix and observe certain hours ; or at any rate to arrange a regular succession of employments.

If we quietly wait in expectation of some particularly favourable moment for teaching, children will soon contrive that this favourable moment shall never arrive. Having once experienced the disadvantage of their good humour in this respect, they will be on their guard, and take care to manifest a contrary disposition, whenever they discover that you intend to resume their lessons.

The time for beginning a lesson should always be determined; but its duration — in all cases very short — may be more or less so, according to circumstances. Attention must be strictly exacted; but the length of time for which it is demanded may be varied. Miss Edgeworth, who gives an account of very extraordinary results from lessons not exceeding five minutes in length, advises that complete attention should be immediately required. And what an advantage it must be to children to be accustomed to collect their wandering thoughts at a moment's notice; to fix their attention directly on any given object, and to exercise their judgment on the most urgent occasions! Perhaps there is no quality which is more under the influence of education, than that most valuable one, usually denominated *presence of mind*. We see it frequently formed by the very circumstances which seem to render it necessary; and, though it is, no doubt, occasionally a natural gift, what more can we expect or hope from education than that by its care we should be enabled to equalize in some degree the distribution of the divine favours?

But as we are obliged to require proofs of exertion from our pupils, we should be particularly careful to reward success by encouragement. This should be done not only in order to assist their first efforts, but to impart to

an imperfect attempt the hope of future success, and to distinguish and applaud every degree of merit. The most trifling attempts of a feeble mind, if successful, should receive as much approbation as the more powerful efforts of a stronger intellect. If children feel certain that their parents — the objects of their warm affection — take a lively interest and pleasure in their progress, they will be animated by a zeal and energy which will urge them to continual advancement.

There is another very natural feeling — perhaps not, in general, sufficiently attended to—the simple wish to do things well. Yet in alluding to this feeling, which, without any cultivation on our part, very commonly exists in children, I have nothing very new to bring forward. We see it constantly displayed in their amusements; to excel in rolling a hoop, spinning a top, or any other exercise, is always an object of their ambition. Independently of the opinion of others, there is a satisfaction in the consciousness that what they had undertaken has been well performed. Give a child his first lesson in writing, and he will exert his utmost ability to do it well, and will be delighted to have the management of a pen.

But this very desirable feeling is too often checked by our injudicious treatment; some-

times by ill-timed reproofs; and at others by the length of the allotted task being such as to render success almost impossible. Long exercises, which must be finished, and long lessons, which must be repeated in some way or other, well or ill, never fail to extinguish all desire to excel. Reduced to despair, the pupil performs what he has to do not only ill, but idly; he acquires a habit of dawdling over his employments, and enters on a sleepy state of existence which renders him incapable either of being amused or instructed: a most deplorable condition, whether as regards his health, his faculties, or his conscience, to whose reiterated reproaches he soon learns to be indifferent.

It should be our endeavour so to graduate the scale of difficulties, as always to insure to children the pleasure of success. By reducing every task to the smallest possible dimensions, we should obtain a right to exact extreme accuracy; by making children thoroughly learn and understand two lines only of either prose or poetry, we should do more towards facilitating their progress, than by hearing them recite whole pages at a time.

Having once gained the point of obtaining a *little well done*, we may advance a step farther, and require the little not only to be well but *quickly* done. Pleased with the exercise of his newly acquired facility, the child will not be surprised

to find that continually increasing efforts are expected from him.

Nothing, however, which is not thoroughly understood should be committed to memory. Before children are capable of application, we are in some degree obliged to trust to that instinct of divination with which they are endowed by nature; but when they begin to make use of their reason, we are inexcusable if, instead of exercising this faculty, we allow them to go on repeating phrases to which they can attach no meaning. Self-love or indolence often leads children to conceal their ignorance as much as possible; and hence they acquire, without our being aware of it, the most erroneous ideas as to the meaning of words. On this account it would be a very useful exercise to employ a few minutes every day in thoroughly explaining to them a few sentences either of prose or verse. This would give us an opportunity of imparting to them much information relative both to language itself, and to the objects which it represents; and, being varied by such questions as are calculated to keep their minds alive and interested, would form an exercise which might be employed with the greatest advantage in the instruction of children of all classes.

When, in addition to the pleasure derived from success, children enjoy that of deserving



and receiving our approbation, this habit of regular occupation tends much to increase their happiness ; and even were lessons useless in other respects, they would be valuable as affording the means of introducing a gentle, but exact discipline. Without their assistance, we should be obliged to invent pretexts for occupying the time, and innocently employing the thoughts of our children ; and even these would not long answer the purpose. Their minds, as they became stronger, would require more arduous employment ; and their ordinary amusements would cease to interest them ; hence they would become restless, teasing, and wearying to those around them ; displaying themselves, and too often exciting in us, an ill humour not easily restrained. But in regular lessons we possess an invaluable resource for soothing irritability, and cultivating good feelings. By exercising activity of mind, we subdue their restless activity of temperament ; and by requiring obedience, and exciting a voluntary desire of improvement, we call into action both the virtues and the faculties of childhood.

But it is not only in childhood that these habits of regularity are valuable. An attention to fixed plans and hours forms a necessary principle of social life, and is useful even in solitude. There is a certain charm — something like the effect of rhythm in music — attached to the

regular return of the same occupations, which marks agreeably the lapse of time. Hence it was that the hours were represented by the ancients as light airy beings, dancing hand in hand.

## CHAPTER VI.

## ON WILLING, OR DELIBERATIVE, OBEDIENCE.

TOWARDS the end of the period of which we are now treating, the existence of children assumes a much more energetic character. Their wishes become more decided, and those fluctuations of the will, of which they were themselves hardly conscious, less frequent. They begin to feel — and we participate in the feeling — that they are responsible beings. Though not yet accustomed to inquire into the secret motives of their actions, they are perfectly aware of their object in performing them ; thus making the first step towards reflection, by which alone the reasoning powers can be developed.

But from these more decided intentions on the part of our children, and from the greater deliberation with which their actions are performed, it follows that their faults become of a more serious nature ; and that what at first were merely the effects of heedlessness and inattention become now intentional offences, arising from a spirit of independence. To prevent this is a most important object. All the power of reasoning of which children are capable should be

exercised, and combined with their best feelings, in order to lead them to submission,— of all the duties of this age, the most important, and the most easily understood, and without which they will never be really happy. To insist on a strict and literal obedience, and to elevate its character, by founding it on such high motives as ought to influence the whole of life, must be the task of the instructor.

The obedience which children at first practise —involuntary, and almost mechanical, in its nature — is a habit which ought to be formed even in infancy; but another kind, of later growth, succeeds, arising from a sense of duty which they wish to fulfil. In the first instance, they obey without thinking; afterwards, they think it right to obey.

As long as they are dependent on us for all their pleasures, for their safety and enjoyment, children, by a sort of implied agreement, conform to our will. Their interest, did they reflect upon it, would induce them to do so; but whether it be that they have some confused notion of this, or that they are led by instinct, by imitation, or by the effect of that influence which naturally disposes weak minds to yield to the strong, they easily submit to our authority, and we shall never fail to render them obedient, if we steadily persevere in making this our object. We may already perceive that the child's conscience is awakened

by his embarrassment and want of ease, when he feels that he has disobeyed our orders ; and unless we have neglected the important task of attending even from infancy to his education, we shall have acquired an authority, founded at first merely on habit, but afterwards on — what is of far greater consequence — an idea of duty.

This docility of infancy, however, unless it afterwards lead to a voluntary and premeditated obedience, will tend only to produce feebleness of character, indifference, or an inclination to be guided entirely by the opinion of others. But when the child's submission arises from a sacred feeling of duty, no such results are to be apprehended. Inspired with such sentiments of piety as are adapted to his age, he will soon understand that all human beings have certain duties imposed on them, and that his, individually, consist in conforming to the laws of parental authority. Obedience, founded on such a conviction, becomes itself a virtue : it requires a certain degree of firmness, and rather augments, than diminishes, the energy of his character ; for the child who resists a temptation, that he may not transgress the commands of his parents, shows not only submission, but strength of mind also.

At the same time, no virtue can be perfectly acquired during infancy, nor, unless favoured by circumstances, will it long continue to

be practised. That which is now the subject of our consideration — obedience — depends very much on the personal qualities of the parents. The docility of the child arises from his esteem for them: having once discovered that their conduct towards him is constantly governed by justice and affection, he learns to respect their tutelary authority, and obeys them with pleasure and confidence. Feeling that they are constantly caring for his safety, his happiness, and his moral progress, he will be almost afraid of being left to his own guidance. Certain that they possess that knowledge and foresight, in which he is deficient, and feeling assured — from recollecting the many proofs he has received of it — of their ardent affection, he learns to anticipate their wishes, and submits even to an irksome command; for resistance appears to him, if not a fault, at least an act of imprudence, or folly, of which he is sure to repent. Nor is he content with merely doing what is required of him, but performs it with all the zeal and energy of which he is capable; his will follows the same direction as that of his parents, and thus even in the act of obeying he is a free agent.

But it is not by assigning a reason for every command that such an effect will be produced; it must be the result of the impression made on

the child by your whole life; by the rectitude which he observes in your conduct towards others, and the affection which he sees bestowed upon himself. By constantly justifying your commands, you seem to allow that they require an excuse, you appeal to the judgment of the child, and tempt him to seek for objections. And if you afterwards assume a tone of authority, which admits of no remonstrance, you are guilty of inconsistency; for if your argument is too strong to be disputed, why have recourse to commands, and thus show a want of confidence in that very reason to which you had appealed? It would have been much better never to have brought it forward.

In the endless explanations attending such a plan, the motive generally held out, in order to enforce our wishes, is the personal advantage of the child. But this only serves to weaken the argument: for in this case, (as in the one formerly alluded to, of instruction,) if you allege his present pleasure, he denies it; and if you speak of his future advantage, he cares little about it; or at any rate believes that he shall have ample time to provide for it hereafter. He will also be often tempted to think that it is enough if he conform to the spirit of your laws, without obeying them literally. Suppose, for instance, you have for-

bidden him to eat fruit, because it will make him ill. As he knows that a small quantity will not produce this effect, he feels no hesitation in disobeying your commands to a certain degree; but obedience, unless it be entire and exact, is of no value.

And not only must it be exact, but immediate. Let our commands be given in few words, but let there be no appeal from them. Every moment that intervenes between an order and its execution is an attempt at rebellion, instigated by self-love. The more we wish our system of education to be governed by a spirit of gentleness, the more necessary it is that it should also be conducted with firmness. It is only by the consciousness of their peculiar rights that parents acquire a degree of consideration, which distinguishes them in the eyes of their children from any other monitors.

From their naturally tender, and often timid, disposition, and from a wish to conciliate the affection of their children, mothers are too frequently tempted to endeavour to obtain what they desire by entreaty rather than command. But this plan is attended with many disadvantages. It reverses the natural order of things; the relations of parent and child are interchanged; children, being solicited, instead of ordered, begin to imagine that *they* are to



grant favours, and *we* to receive them; that they are kind to us, and that we are unthankful. Hence it follows that they lose the feeling of gratitude to their parents, and are especially wanting in it towards their mother. We shall always repent if we allow that filial respect, which is an absolute duty in a child, to be weakened, in the vain hope of cultivating his affections, without any reference to his moral feelings.

Mothers do not seem sufficiently to consider that they are responsible for their child's duties towards themselves, as well as for the performance of his other duties. Their object is to make him a moral being; and no subtilty of reasoning can do away with the obligation he is under to fulfil his first earthly duty—that of reverence and obedience to his parents.

“I do not insist on my children coming to wish me good morning,” says a mother, “or writing regularly to me when absent; I wish them to be guided in all these respects by their feelings.” And this might be very well, were their feelings certain to lead them to perform these duties. But suppose they do not. You will, in that case, have failed to inspire either that romantic attachment which you so much desire, or, what is of far more importance, a firm resolution—which at present they can show only by their filial piety—to fulfil all their duties.

The idea of the awful and indispensable responsibility with which we are charged should reconcile us to the severity which is occasionally necessary in education. Nor is it at all difficult to make this intelligible to children themselves. Amongst the various motives which might be assigned for the restraint which we are sometimes obliged to impose upon them, this one alone, frequently and simply brought forward, would have more effect than a thousand minute explanations.

“I am responsible for you, my child,” might a father say, “responsible to God, who has bestowed you on me, and responsible to your fellow-creatures also. Were I to neglect watching over, and protecting you, I should be guilty in the sight of God; and were I not to oppose your evil inclinations, I should be still more guilty; for he has entrusted you to my care, that I might make you wise and good. This is so well understood, that, should you conduct yourself ill, it will be considered as my fault. When a child is passionate, headstrong, disagreeable, the natural remark is, that he is ill brought up: the father is reproached for his child’s faults, and is made answerable for the consequences of them. And it is right that it should be so; because the care of their family has been confided to parents both by human laws and by the will of God. Since, then, I am responsible for your

conduct, I must adopt such means as seem to me most likely to make you good, and if you yourself assist me in this task, all will go on well and smoothly: I shall have no occasion to employ restraint; you will consequently have more freedom, and I shall be much happier. But if you will not enter into my views, if your conduct be injurious both to yourself and others, I shall be obliged to have recourse to severity, and we shall both be rendered unhappy."

It will be perceived, that I do not apprehend any evil from a father's owning to his child that he has a personal interest in his good conduct. There is sometimes a degree of self-gratification in our very desire to appear disinterested. "It is for your own good that I recommend this," we say: "it is perfectly indifferent to me." But even supposing this were true, and that the good of our children did not interest us on our own account, as the means of sparing us much trouble and inconvenience, yet it would be better unsaid. Disinterestedness, though one of the most beautiful features in the parental character, is not the one which children are best capable of appreciating; and it would often be more desirable to keep it entirely in the back-ground.

Judicious parents will not enforce, in their own name, such obligations as are clearly imposed by the divine law. When the voice of religion and conscience makes itself distinctly

heard, all that is necessary is to lead children to attend to its dictates. We do not say to a child, I forbid you to strike your brother, or to take what does not belong to you ; but if, after being warned, he commit these faults, we have an acknowledged right to punish him. A child of six years old, who had been severely punished by his mother for a fault of this description, said to her afterwards, " You are a very good mother, and bring me up quite well." Nor is it, indeed, their own right alone that parents are thus vindicating ; they perform this act of justice as the representatives of the Supreme Authority.

The numerous obligations imposed by society, and therefore properly insisted on by education, must form the objects of parental commands and prohibitions. The necessity of complying with these obligations is not evident, nor can it always be demonstrated by reasoning. Here, then, the father steps in : his rights being sacred, and rendered indisputable by his responsibility, he exercises them at his pleasure, on all the actions of his child, whom he considers as his own peculiar property. And the child, on his part, acknowledges the lawfulness of his father's authority ; should he hesitate to do so, it must be the fault of his education.

We have, then, the power of determining certain acts to be criminal ; but only with the understanding, that they must be clearly defined,

and that the child be forewarned as to the risk he runs in committing them. In the same manner we may easily attach the idea of prudence to certain efforts of attention, or exertion, the utility of which might not as yet be understood by him, and thus we may accomplish the task of instruction. But in this arbitrary part of education, we must always be moderate in the use of our means : the sentiment we have to work upon is not deeply enough impressed for us to venture on applying it to any very rigid principles. It is through the indirect connection of filial obedience that application to study, and many of our other injunctions, become associated with moral feeling ; and as parental authority is a divine institution, any opposition to it must be considered as criminal. But we should not appeal to the conscience of children for the correction of such faults as arise from want of reflection, volatileness, or momentary impulse, any more than we should call in the aid of religion when an exercise is carelessly done, or any little act of politeness omitted. If these sacred names be not thus profaned, parents will retain the advantage of being able to bring them forward with much gréater effect, whenever their assistance may be properly demanded.

If we are careful to encourage a firm and voluntary obedience on the part of the child, the

motives which lead to this obedience are not less beneficial than its more ostensible effects. He displays no servile fear, nor yet that passive acquiescence which often arises from mere weakness of mind. His obedience, inspired by love, confidence, respect, and that sentiment of duty by which the whole soul is sanctified, may be termed an active principle. All severity becomes unnecessary, and it is only on very rare occasions that parental authority has to be exerted. This alone is a very great advantage; for every one knows how much the most sacred rights suffer from being brought too frequently forward.

Yet we must not deceive ourselves; all conduct at this age is founded on submission to authority; however good or moral the spirit of obedience may be, it is still only obedience. The child neither understands, nor cares to understand, the motives which actuate us in laying down our laws; he takes them literally as commands, without considering any thing beyond their application to the present occasion. If you have desired him not to climb trees, this prohibition will not seem to him to forbid his mounting a ladder; and though his natural sense of justice frequently breaks out, it is only with respect to actions. Thoughts, feelings, wishes, which produce no external effect, are nothing to him. He lives, like the ancient

Jews, under the dominion of the old covenant, governed by the law of positive ordinances and precise commands. He has no general ideas, and little desire to acquire any. He has no inclination to disturb his simple enjoyment by doubts, or by a subtle and close analysis, which does not suit either his existence — so entirely dependent on external objects — or his intellectual powers, as yet so partially cultivated.

This quiescent state of mind is not only pleasing to children, but, for some time at least, salutary also: their will is strengthened by being freely exercised within certain defined limits, and as it generally inclines them to efforts of physical strength and agility, facilitates their progress in these respects. But neither education, nor the growth of their moral faculties, will allow this state of mind to become a permanent one. New desires, giving rise to doubts, and tending to exercise their reasoning powers, spring up in their minds; they acquire fresh thoughts and feelings, and they must become either better or worse.

No doubt they will soon imbibe from our lessons, as well as from our example, more independent ideas of duty; whilst their joining in family worship will tend to inspire them with the ennobling spirit of Christianity. In little girls, especially, the greater development of their affections, and the more earnest desire to please, produce,

at a very early age, a more distinct, though, as yet, feeble and vacillating feeling of moral responsibility. But we have still many difficulties to encounter, before the principles become steadily fixed, and delicacy of conscience can be united to energy of character.



## BOOK IV.

PERIOD BETWEEN SEVEN AND TEN.  

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## CHAPTER I.

CHARACTER OF CHILDREN AT THE COMMENCEMENT OF THIS PERIOD.—ADDITIONAL DIFFICULTIES IN EDUCATION.

WE are now arrived at a period of difficulty and anxiety ; when the instinct of sympathy, which has hitherto existed in children, becomes much weaker, whilst their reasoning powers are as yet but faintly developed. The fascinating charms of infancy have passed away ; the twilight of real life has appeared ; and the child, awakening from his pleasing dreams, seems to feel the chilling influence of the morning air.

In proportion as surrounding objects assume a greater semblance of reality, every thing in children themselves becomes also more distinctly marked. Their personal appearance and features, acquiring a more decided character, have lost much of their charm ; and their more

angular movements, and taller figures, no longer display that gracefulness which so well supplied the place of more regular beauty; even their manner of seeing and feeling is altered; and they present themselves to us under an entirely different aspect.

Nor should we, perhaps, regret this change. It is better that our eyes should be opened, and that we should be freed from the magical influence of those charms, on which children are too apt to presume, and by which we are so often beguiled into a forgetfulness of our proper authority. For little girls, more especially, it is very desirable that there should be an interval between the age when they fascinate as children, and that when they charm as women; and that, while their character still retains its flexibility, a period should intervene, during which they can hope to please only by means of more solid qualities.

During the infancy of our children, their very imperfections rendered them only more delightful in our eyes. These little creatures, in appearance so guileless and innocent, were even then full of themselves; but they showed at the same time so much sympathy, that their very egotism interested us. So great was their confidence in our affection, that they never for a moment imagined that we should not be interested in whatever interested them; and in

hastening to relate to us their little distresses, concluded that our grief would equal theirs. But as they grow older, and perceive that their feelings, instead of always meeting with sympathy, are occasionally blamed, they become aware that their existence is not necessarily connected with ours; and they take upon themselves, sometimes almost with a bitter feeling, an independent part. Their egotism — no longer that ingenuous feeling which had no suspicion that it could give offence — assumes a character sometimes of moroseness or taciturnity, and sometimes of open opposition; resisting and overcoming their sympathy, and glorying in the conquest.

At the same time that the dispositions of infancy are thus evidently passing away, we may observe that the involuntary impulses of instinct are exchanged for deliberate intentions. When the infant first began to copy our actions, this was merely the natural effect of sympathy: he made no calculations as to the difference between his age and ours; nor, in imitating what we did, or said, could he perceive the difference between his motives and ours. In a little while, however, he begins to understand better what he is about. His self-love becomes interested; and when he imitates us, it is because he wishes to raise himself above his present condition, and to play the part of a

man. But this is not always the case ; at times, as, for instance, when he sees us engaged in any serious employment, or in some undertaking above his capacity, he loses all desire to be any thing more than a spectator, and gladly resumes his usual indifference. There are certain moments also, when children acknowledge themselves as such, and rejoice to take advantage of the privileges of childhood : they will even over-act their part, relating to us with an exaggerated importance some event in which they know that we shall feel little interest, and taking care to run away before we can tell them so. They already possess more foresight than we give them credit for, though it often suits their purpose to conceal it from us.

At no time, perhaps, is the character of this age so remarkably displayed, as in seasons of distress or trouble of any kind. The emotions by which we are agitated are not unobserved by our children, though they often seem unwilling to participate in them. They feel a sort of curiosity concerning the impressions of grown-up people, something resembling the interest we experience at the representation of a tragedy. They are touched at the sight of grief, especially if it be accompanied by tears ; but, disliking to show the interest which they feel, they often assume an air of stupid indifference. On such occasions we should be careful

not to exact from them any demonstrations of a sensibility, which they possess in reality, but in the outward expression of which they feel awkward and uncomfortable. Indeed, generally speaking, it is better that children should not witness any violent displays of emotion; the effect produced by them can hardly fail to be injurious: for if they participate in them, the shock is too great for their delicate nerves; and if they do not, this apparent want of sympathy in our feelings may cause a degree of mutual alienation.

Something akin to this disposition in children is that which leads them to make themselves at times appear less rational than they really are. Before their moral feeling is fully developed, any exaggerated expressions of approbation are apt to retard its progress: they are vexed to have committed themselves by displaying too much sense, or goodness, and seem to say, "We need not have taken so much pains." Being at this time in a state of transition between two ages, some of the qualities belonging to each may be observed in them. Sometimes they display all the unreasonableness and egotism of infancy, without its charms; whilst at others, they manifest a sense of morality—a devotedness—an anxiety to do right—on which a mother may well found the most cheering hopes. This period is, in

fact, one in which they are passing from instinct to knowledge, from involuntary sympathy to recognized feelings; and, as their knowledge is yet very imperfect, and their feelings either not very lively, or ill-regulated, it must be a period of much confusion. But now it is that we perceive the value of such good habits as have already been formed, and constitute a sort of mechanical connection between the past and the future: they oppose the accumulated force of a uniform movement to the capricious impulses of the passing moment.

It is an observation but too true, though not very encouraging, that the progress of intellectual developement, however great, is not always accompanied by a proportionate moral improvement. We see that the child is able not only to make a wonderfully accurate calculation as to his own interest or pleasure, and to display infinite address in accomplishing his designs, but that he has also fully understood even those precepts of morality which he entirely neglects to observe. In defending his own rights, he is an advocate for the most strict justice; and when he himself is not concerned, he will gravely reprove his brothers and sisters, telling them how wrong it is not to obey their parents, how shameful to be ignorant, and how wicked to take what does not belong to them. These maxims, which we had imagined entirely thrown

away upon him, are brought forward on such occasions in the most forcible manner, and urged with persuasive energy. We then perceive that he has at least gained something : he knows that these are the sort of admonitions that are addressed to others ; and we might almost fancy that he was intentionally caricaturing human nature.

But, trifling as the progress thus made may appear, it is not to be despised. In proportion as the moral feelings become more fully developed, we shall find that to have obtained the conviction of the understanding is in itself a great advantage ; it secures to us the secret approbation of the child, even when we are opposing his caprices. We have gained an advocate in his own breast. But, although we may thus seem to have accomplished a portion of our task, the greatest and most difficult part remains to be achieved. As yet the child possesses only that reasoning faculty which hardly deserves the higher appellation of reason. This latter and far nobler quality, resulting from that happy combination of piety and knowledge which is effected by education, requires time for its formation, and time cannot yet have done much for us.

We may, indeed, occasionally meet with a disposition so good, or an education so excellent, as to prevent the occurrence of such difficulties ;

and they are also frequently avoided when children are brought up alone. When they have no companions but ourselves, their indolence, added to the confused notion which they possess of their insignificance, leads them to connect their own interests so closely with ours, that they naturally seek to please us. Eagerly desirous of novelty, and knowing that they depend on us for supplying their life with incidents, they easily accommodate themselves to any circumstances which add to the variety of their existence : gaiety or seriousness, amusements, lessons, or even remonstrances, any thing, in short, in the form of an event, is agreeable to them ; and even our frequent exhortations, however wearying they may sometimes find them, serve to fill up their time. But when they are associated with companions of their own age, our part becomes a much less prominent one. Relying on each other for assistance and support, we have now to deal with a new feeling, which has sprung up in their breasts — a sort of party spirit. A more animated state of existence gives rise to a multitude of new desires ; their character becomes more distinctly marked, and the influence of growing age is increased in each by the power with which it acts on all. The earnest importance which they attach to their amusements — their eager pursuit of some common end — the strongly excited passions of



individuals continually moderated by those of the mass—the sort of imperfect but severe justice which they exercise amongst themselves—are all evidences of the commencement of a social state; an introduction into actual, real, life; differing, however, widely from the artificial existence which we endeavour to create for them, by leading them to turn their attention to the future.

And hence we see that our qualities, our tenderness, even our authority, may for a time be eclipsed, and lost sight of by our children. Compared with the animation of these little communities, in which an equality of rights and similarity of disposition produce so many points of contact—compared with the companionship of a number of careless, volatile creatures, all eagerly pursuing the same objects, and full of the enjoyment arising from their lately acquired powers—how cold, how restrained and uninteresting, must our society appear! and how slow and insensible our older and more staid feelings, in comparison with the electric rapidity, and eager vivacity, with which they seize on every thing! Even our interference, which is sometimes rendered necessary by the violence or passion of an individual, only presents us to them in the character of a judge—an umpire—in fact, merely a necessary evil.

These are, it must be confessed, but melancholy considerations; and if mothers allow them-

selves to be discouraged by them, this crisis will not be exempt from danger. Feeling their own comparative weakness, they are tempted to call in the aid of masters, or governesses, and sometimes to give up their vocation altogether, and thus separate themselves, in great measure, from their children. I shall revert to this most important period, when I have occasion to address myself more particularly to mothers; but, in the mean time, I would earnestly exhort them not to despair; to arm themselves with firmness; and, in an especial manner, to guard against a feeling of discontent, and that coldness which is its natural consequence.

“How is it,” says the grieved mother, “that my children are become less docile, and less affectionate, at the very moment when I thought I might depend on their good feelings? at the very moment — for which I have been so anxiously waiting — when their reason seems in many respects so much strengthened? What is become of that entire and touching confidence which was so gratifying to my love?”

But, in asking these questions, are there not others also which she might address to herself? Is she conscious of no cause for self-reproach? Does she feel sure that she has been as constantly careful to promote the happiness of her children as when they were younger and more dependent on her? As the charms of infancy

have disappeared, have not her lively and almost involuntary demonstrations of affection been diminished? Has she bestowed as many caresses on their pale, thin faces, as she did on their plump, rosy cheeks? Has she not reproved them for the very faults which a thousand playful excuses formerly led her to tolerate? And do not the poor children behold the favour and happiness they formerly enjoyed, transferred to their younger brothers and sisters? They cannot fail to observe that they do not, in general, produce the same pleasing impression which they did; and, far from blaming their mother, they may, perhaps, have the candour to attribute the fault entirely to themselves. But this very feeling—the conviction that they no longer possess the power of charming—renders them timid; and this period, which may be termed the old age of infancy, is often characterised by the same distrust of themselves which is observed in real old age. This new condition requires encouragement and consolation; and a great degree of delicate consideration is necessary both in our treatment of it, and in our endeavours to re-establish a gentle and easy intercourse with our children, when any passing cloud may have disturbed the serenity of their temper. Should their affection, as will sometimes naturally happen, seem cooled, we must be most careful not to allow the bond by which they are united to us to be loosened:

weakened, it may be, for a time, but only to become the stronger afterwards; and the hopes which such a bond affords us of future happiness in this world are less fallacious than any others.

In the anxieties attending education, as in all others, religion alone can restore our minds to a state of calmness. And how much is this tranquillity required for our self-regulation, when our dearest interests are at stake, and grief and distrust have taken possession of our hearts! It is only when we refer everything to God, that we can feel that all is right; it is only when we look upon everything as transitory, that we can pass with courage through the troubled moments of this short life. Such considerations will enable us to form a steady and immoveable resolution to redouble our cares in the education of our children; to forget ourselves as much as possible; and, especially, to avoid entangling ourselves in all the susceptibilities of tenderness and self-love, which must in the end lead us astray. Such a disposition will also bestow upon us that flexibility of mind, which will enable us to take advantage of every circumstance that may arise, and to discover the many different avenues by which, in different characters, we may obtain access to the truth. It will prevent our adhering tenaciously to any one plan or system, and make us consider all plans and all

systems — even parental authority itself — only as so many various means of leading our children to the love of God, and to the fulfilment of his holy will. The elevated feelings inspired by religion will not only enable the mother to regain her own tranquillity, but will also assist her in restoring that of her children, and in binding them more closely than ever to herself. Christianity, indeed, is the only resource which we can offer to assist parents in overcoming the difficulties they will continually have to encounter. And, in the hope of rendering this resource still more available, I shall offer some additional remarks on the important subject of religion; particularly as connected with the period which now occupies our attention.

## CHAPTER II.

### FOUNDATION OF MORALITY. — DEVELOPEMENT OF THE RELIGIOUS FEELINGS.

FROM the observations made in the preceding chapter, we may easily perceive, that at the commencement of the period with which we are now occupied, there is nothing in which children are so deficient as consistency of character. And, perhaps, we ought not to be surprised at this. Less dependent upon us than they were, and yet not completely habituated to the customs of civilized society, they struggle to escape from the restraints of education. All their faculties have expanded; but those which have been the most recently developed, are not such as are most likely to favour our views. At the same time that the sacrifice of their own will is rendered more difficult by their increased physical strength, which enables them to accomplish many of their wishes without our assistance, the corresponding progress of their intellectual qualities does not lead to that docility which we require from them. Reason does not yet act its most important part; it is not yet that noble faculty, which enables us to judge of actions,

and appreciate their motives: it is merely a feeling of timid prudence, which admonishes them that they are not in a condition to resist our authority. Not yet matured, and continually fluctuating in its intentions, at one time it teaches them submission, and at another urges them to rebellion. Hence arise their internal struggles with themselves, and their painful disputes with their instructors;—in short, to this cause may be referred all the inconsistency of their conduct.

But are we left without any resource at this important epoch? Is there not some favourable principle, which, while it supplies the place of that sympathy which is gradually dying away, may in some degree anticipate the future progress of reason? No doubt such a resource does exist: and, if we have not neglected the early cultivation of the affections, we shall find in these feelings germs which will spring up abundantly in the happiest developements.

As the child becomes aware of his ignorance he perceives that his feeble intellect would not suffice to protect him from danger. But he is not rendered unhappy by this discovery; he confides implicitly in the love and wisdom, not only of his earthly parent, but of his Heavenly Father; in fact, the two feelings seem to him almost the same; the hallowed name of piety may be applied to both, for being the result, not

of the blind instinct of infancy, but of reflection, they acquire a character of holiness ; and when filial respect is thus strengthened by a sentiment of religion, the task of education becomes much less arduous. But this feeling is of heavenly origin, nor would parents be able to inspire it, if they were not the representatives of a far higher authority.

At this important moment, then, when the rapid flight of time renders the least delay dangerous, we would once more urge upon mothers the necessity of seeking their strongest support in a religious education. Never allow your efforts on this point to be relaxed ; never lose sight of this important end ; whatever may stand in the way — whether physical obstacles, difficulties as to lessons or exercises of any kind — never let this great object, which will hereafter enable you to accomplish all you wish, be neglected. Yet it must at the same time be remembered, that great as may be the power which religion possesses as a motive to exertion, it is not by considering it as a means only, that we secure its most efficacious assistance.

The impossibility of succeeding in our views, unless we can obtain the willing co-operation of our children, is no doubt a very important consideration. At this epoch, when the task of education becomes more necessary than ever, and at the same time more difficult, when



something has always been wanting in the character of the Deity: the Gospel alone has presented Him to us, invested with all the attributes of power, splendour, and perfection.

To inspire her children with love for this Holy Being, and with gratitude to the Saviour, who has opened to us the way to divine mercy, should be the first desire of a mother's heart, and her great object in that family devotion, which, even were it not a sacred duty, would be needed as a relief to the heart. If our views were truly religious and enlarged, so as to embrace the entire destiny of an immortal being, the duties of each day would become much easier. We should be studiously careful to lay aside all minute points of morality, and to forget all temporary difficulties, when engaged in acts of devotion. The soothing influence of these holy exercises is entirely destroyed, if the feelings of our children be ruffled by painful allusions, or implied reproaches; or if there be any public reference in them to the faults of individuals. Let the time of family worship be a season of peace, serenity, and love; give it as much as possible a heavenly character; we shall find it but too easy to fall back again to earth.

The importance attached by their mother to the eternal welfare of her children, will make the greater impression on them, from its being

entirely the effect of her disinterested affection. Were we to consider religion only as an instrument of education—an additional obligation, imposed in order to secure the observance of our other injunctions — they would not fail to perceive it: a secret distrust would take possession of their minds, and we should soon find them cold, reserved, prepossessed, and unwillingly listening to our lessons of morality.

Let us then raise religion to her proper rank, and assign to her the first place in all our instruction: let us represent human life to our children as the road which will lead them to God, if they diligently comply with his holy behests; let us teach them that peace with Him in this world, and an eternal union with Him in the next, induce a state of happiness, of which the gentle emotions of piety already afford us a foretaste.

But should we reverse this order of things, and allow them to imagine that we view religion only as a valuable means of obtaining their present obedience, its dignity and importance will be fatally diminished in their eyes. Nor can we ever present it to them under its most sacred aspect, unless we make our instruction itself an act of devotion. Every allusion to our relation to God, every mention of his sacred name, should bear the impress of a devotional spirit. And what words are so proper to be employed on these occasions as those of God

himself? From what source can we so well derive both the form and the substance of our instruction, as from the Holy Scriptures? Compared with the authority of these divine lessons, what is that of any human teaching? Possessing such an inestimable treasure, why should we make use of catechisms, which so weaken the force of these divine principles, that we hardly recognize them in their new form? Perhaps it may be said, that by thus collecting, and arranging in regular order, the most important truths, we render them more capable of being committed to the memory. But if all that has been done consists in bringing words together, and giving them an uncouth and scholastic appearance—in short, in changing religion into theology—surely whatever the head has gained must have been at the expense of the heart. If, indeed, after all, the memory have gained anything: but we do not often find, in the hour of trial, when men are exposed to imminent danger, when they are ill or dying, that it is their catechism which they call to mind for comfort or support. No—passages from the Psalms, or from the Gospel, are what they recollect at such times, and repeat with the greatest delight.

As we owe all our knowledge of religion to divine revelation, the manner in which mankind have been thus instructed may well serve as a model for our imitation. Now, if we observe

the mode of teaching employed in the Gospel, we find that everything is there connected with facts. A progressive plan, resembling the historical one which we formerly recommended, may be followed for a length of time. In the Sacred Writings every thing is in some way or other associated with action; every doctrinal truth, every moral precept, is announced either on some special occasion, or with some accompanying circumstance. Herein lies the secret of the deep interest which they excite. Children feel as if Jesus Christ and his Apostles were actually present with them, and addressed their discourses to them individually; as if they were the known and venerated guides of their youth.

We cannot expect that the whole of what is read of the Holy Scriptures in the assembled family should be understood by children. But an important point has been gained if they have learnt to listen with reverence, and to feel that in thus devoting to God the beginning of every day, they are fulfilling a sacred duty. In order, however, to attain so desirable an object, we should be careful not to occupy too much time with this reading; and we must never forget that our chief aim should be, not so much to enlighten the understanding, as to kindle a devotional spirit in the soul. But the hallowed feelings which ought to be inspired by domestic

worship are destroyed, if it be accompanied by a multitude of explanations, and by the questions consequent upon these, in order to ascertain whether they have been sufficiently clear. Children then become occupied with their own part in the business, and with the effect they may produce, and are no longer alive to the soothing influence of religion. And sometimes, too, the tranquillity, or the gravity of those present, is so much disturbed by their original expressions, or restless movements, as to produce an undesirable effect, and leave a very different impression on their minds from what we had intended to produce.

Even when we feel that a few explanations are necessary after reading the Scriptures, we should carefully avoid entering upon any difficult questions. Any thing like a laboured definition, or a pedantic choice of words, will arrest the flow of our own feelings, and throw a coldness over those of our children. After pointing out to them the historical connection of the passage we have just read with that which preceded it, we may deduce from it some particular truth, and explain its various bearings. Of course it should be our endeavour to choose in the first instance such as are the most simple, the best adapted to their capacities, and the most influential on human life. And in this

manner may all the most important principles of religion be successively explained to children, and deeply impressed on their hearts.

But, after all, true devotion finds its greatest resource in prayer. As instruction descends from God to man, so prayer ascends from man to God; and thus a reciprocal intercourse is established. So powerful is the effect of prayer, that every secret communication receives its reward, every additional degree of fervour or exaltation in our piety draws down the blessing of a clearer revelation. But in addition to this inestimable benefit, prayer affords us a pleasing and easy means of instruction. Nothing tends so much to impress children with the great importance of Christian principles as hearing the earnest supplications of their mother, that these principles may reign in the hearts of all. And what can be so likely to convince them of their own sinfulness, and of their need of a Saviour and of the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit, as hearing their mother's heart-felt prayers to obtain this succour for herself? Could any direct instruction produce so happy an effect?

At the same time, we must never forget that we can build only on such foundations as we possess. At first, the prayers we offer up with our children should relate principally to earthly blessings — to our *daily bread*. We should

pray for the health, peace, and happiness of those who are present, and of the absent also; and we should make our children understand that if our prayers do not always seem to be heard, it is because God has some more desirable blessing in store for us.

If, however, from the fear of disturbing the solemnity of our family worship, we exclude from it all explanations and questions, we must not imagine that all religious education is comprehended in this act of devotion. So long as children are only allowed to listen in silence, we have no means of knowing what progress they have made; we cannot discover either whether their understanding has been enlightened, or their feelings touched. Some other means must therefore be resorted to in order to assure ourselves on this head; and in religious instruction, as in every other, the interrogative system affords the only test by which we can ascertain how far they have understood what they have heard. In the Gospel — that book, at once so simple and so profound, so admirably suited to all ages, and all times — there are, no doubt, very many ideas which they are perfectly capable of understanding: but still we must feel sure that their attention has been given to them. One hour a week devoted to this inquiry would be sufficient. And as religious instruction ought always to be kept distinct

from any other, it is better to have a specified time allotted for it; and Sunday, being the day on which the ordinary lessons are suspended, seems naturally pointed out as suitable for this purpose. The examination, followed by such questions as arise from it, may then take place; and if it be thought advisable, a more regular form may then be given to our instruction.

It is not without great distrust of myself that I venture to touch on this important subject, or presume to offer any advice upon it. Yet it does seem to me that even for this more methodical teaching, we might content ourselves with having recourse to the sacred writers; and by making use of such books as contain questions, the answers to which must be sought for (by the help of figures referring to the necessary passages) in the Bible itself, we might form a sort of scriptural catechism, which, by means of questions and explanations might become the medium of much valuable instruction.

But a still more essential point is, the personal application of the divine law to the child himself, and to all the circumstances of his life. This, which can only be done where a close and intimate union exists, belongs exclusively to the mother's department. Unless the confidence of the child be gained, no feelings will



either be discovered, or communicated; and no one is so capable of inspiring this confidence as a mother. Authority must, in this instance, be laid aside; mildness must take the place of severity, and by means of easy, familiar conversations, free from any suspicion of hidden meanings, or fear of reproof, she must establish an appearance of equality between her children and herself. Giving free utterance to her own feelings, let her draw largely upon her memory for recollections of her own childhood: while listening to the history of her life, of the mistakes she committed from ignorance, of her errors, her gradual progress in piety, they will open their own hearts in return, and confide to her all their thoughts and impressions. The effect which is produced on them by the Gospel may easily be discovered by the tone of their voice, or the expression of their countenance. "What would you have done, my child," asks the mother, "if you had been the brother of the prodigal son? Should you have felt angry that the fatted calf was killed to celebrate his return and repentance? Or, if you had been one of the labourers who had worked all day in the vineyard, should you have been vexed when those who had worked only one hour received as much as you did?" By such questions as these, and others relating either to life in general, or more particularly to

that of the children themselves, a thousand opportunities will be afforded of rectifying their judgment, inspiring them with a truly evangelical spirit, and imbuing them with a practical and Christian morality.

There are occasions, however, when religion must be presented under a more serious aspect; it must not always be divested of its sterner beauty. But should a child, who, when his feelings were not excited, had approved of its laws, afterwards transgress them, the slightest allusion to our previous conversations with him will be sufficient to convince him of his error; the precept, having already been acknowledged, will not have the appearance of being now brought forward on purpose to wound his feelings; and his love for truth will remain as strong as ever. But in recalling to his memory the particular law which he has broken, never let us appeal to the Gospel as a witness against him in a moment of distress or irritation. It is a profanation of the word of God either to make it the medium of our anger, or to address it to one who is too much excited to listen to it with reverence.

By persevering in the use of these three methods: daily family worship — a more methodical instruction on Sunday — and a private examination from time to time in conversation — the chances of our success will no doubt be very great: but yet we must not be too sanguine.

All progress at this age must be slow and irregular. A variety of different causes — a particular state of bodily temperament, of which, perhaps, we have not been aware, — that craving for mental and physical activity which is never entirely satisfied; — the restraint imposed by a state of dependence, — all tend to increase in children that capricious mutability which is so natural to the human will. Intervals of coldness too will occur, of indifference towards God, and towards every thing good; faults that we had thought corrected will appear again; and we shall almost fear at times that our children, instead of advancing, are retrograding.

Unless a mother be deeply impressed with feelings of piety, these continual disappointments might indeed be enough to make her despair. It seems to her as if every thing was to be begun anew; as if reason, affection, and even religion had failed; — and no wonder that she is cast down. Seeing no resource left, she is tempted to give up her most important duty, and, provided she can save appearances, to resign herself to the idea of being satisfied with a very moderate degree of morality in her children. And such conduct is easily understood, when we recollect that no human power can sustain our zeal, if it appear to produce no fruit. But the mother who believes in the

actuating providence of God, never relaxes her efforts. Persuaded that the door which to-day is closed may to-morrow be opened by the influence of His holy spirit, she knocks with courage and perseverance.

Still children will for a length of time be only children. Their physical will overcome their spiritual nature. They will be content with obeying the letter of the law, divine as well as human : they are aware that bad motives are the cause of wrong actions ; but they do not yet know that interested motives sometimes lead to apparently good conduct. We must patiently wait for their moral feelings to be developed by degrees, under the fostering influence of divine light. Having always acknowledged the authority of conscience, they will soon learn to bring all their actions before its tribunal, and will perceive that they must regulate not only their conduct, but even the feelings of their hearts by its laws.

I shall conclude this chapter with a few remarks of an entirely practical nature.

In the arrangements of the day the time allotted for domestic worship should be as early as possible in the morning, in order that children may join in it before their tranquillity has been in any way disturbed ; and it is also better that it should not immediately precede the hour of recreation, lest a feeling of

impatience should take possession of their volatile minds. And in this employment, as in every other, we should carefully avoid excess of any kind; our devotional exercises must not be long, and we must make use of no exaggerated expressions. We must be more afraid of *too much* than *too little*. Deficiencies may be supplied; but the traces left by listlessness are not easily effaced. Let the great object be, to inspire our children with a feeling of pleasure in religion — to give them a growing taste for holiness. How much more satisfactory is it to see them hasten with delight to partake in the family devotions, than to observe in their countenances, when they come from them, that gloomy and sad expression, which is sometimes imagined to arise from feelings of compunction!

We must be especially on our guard against the slightest taint of hypocrisy; without however considering it necessary to give it this odious name. Children often have no intention to deceive; they are only a little premature in assuming the expression of a feeling, which they hope soon really to experience. But this would afterwards lead to affectation of every kind. Let us be careful not to receive from them any promise, or accept of any sacrifice, of which they may hereafter repent. It is much better to tell them that we will wait to see whether they make the same offer that day six months.

Let Sunday be a day of holy enjoyment, but always a day of enjoyment ; and, above all, let a spirit of peace and happiness preside over it. And how can we in any way bestow so much pleasure on our children as by giving them the power of conferring happiness on others ? At their age they have little merit in their charity, and they are quite aware of this ; but let them at any rate experience the gratification which it affords. And on this sacred day, particularly, let us give them an opportunity of tasting the exquisite delight arising from benevolence. Let them never forget, that one of the reasons alleged for the institution of this day of holy rest was, “that the son of the servant may rejoice.”

Much discretion is required in our religious conversations with our children. If we possess the art of rendering them interesting, opportunities of introducing them will easily and naturally occur. When the mother finds that her children are themselves eager for a renewal of such themes, she will reap the reward of all her anxiety and pains in the soothing conviction, that the seeds of piety have been sown in their hearts : their filial affection will be strengthened, and the bonds of love between brothers and sisters drawn closer. In families where such an interchange of holy feelings is habitual, a spirit of harmony prevails, which

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we cannot behold without emotion. Feeling that they are united together for eternity, they sympathize more closely in the earthly destiny of each other; and while the troubles of each are participated in by all, an elevated tone of feeling encourages that frankness of heart, which worldly interests too often banish from human intercourse. In such happy families, where the sympathies of nature and reason are in unison, the contentment which we behold on every countenance proves how true it is, that piety "has the promise of the life that now is, and that which is to come."

### CHAPTER III.

SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED. — AUXILIARY MEANS  
TO BE EMPLOYED.

THE higher the motives of which we make use in education, and the more we desire that their efficacy should continue through life, the greater should be our watchfulness in observing their effects.

In the filial affection of our children, in their love of what is good, and love of God, we possess the only feelings the influence of which must always be desirable. Closely connected together, they support and revive each other; they contain the secret principle of every truly beneficial developement. But, if we would render their action certain and durable, we must not be continually calling in their assistance. There is a sort of profanation in appealing to such sacred names on every trifling occasion.

The influence which any of the various means employed in education exercise is soon exhausted; impressions, however vivid at first, are effaced; resources, on which we relied im-



plicitly, lose their power; and can neither be applied to all indiscriminately, nor to the same individual for any length of time. How is it that we can so little calculate on the effect of any moral receipts for education? The cause is to be found in that boundless unceasing aptitude for enjoyment with which children have been endowed by Providence: an enjoyment continually renewing itself, often tempting them to escape from our authority, and at times emboldening them to constitute themselves their own masters.

The pleasures which children invent for themselves — pleasures the more vivid from being unexpected and freely chosen — have far more charms in their eyes than any we can bestow upon them. And they have little dread of punishments; such as are future they never trouble themselves about, and from such as are present they endeavour to escape. Even the ideas of parental anger, remorse of conscience, or the displeasure of their Heavenly Father, however terrible they may seem at first, soon die away, or at any rate become much less formidable. Their lightness of heart, their hopefulness and gaiety, enable them to confront every thing. If they be deprived of some particular objects of amusement, they soon forget them, and substitute other sports for those which have been forbidden; and if confined as prisoners

in one room, they either contrive to invent entertainment for themselves, or quietly fall asleep. Our best plan is to endeavour to turn this capacity for happiness to good account. Nothing can subdue their elasticity of mind, or deaden that energy which springs up again and again, except such a persecuting and vexatious system of education as would be far more pernicious than any thing else, and in the end totally destructive of morality.

Perhaps there is no influential motive which is more liable to fluctuation, than that arising from the affections of children. These affections, though perpetually subject to the fickleness of the heart and imagination, still exist in the inmost recesses of the soul, even when we are unable to make use of them any longer as actuating causes. Thus even filial love, the most precious of all feelings to a mother, must be employed only with the greatest precaution. Yet, as this sentiment is the earliest which is awakened in the infant breast, and is the chief agent in exciting others, and as, moreover, the mother's affection is gratified by any proof of its power, she is too apt to have recourse to it on all occasions. But it seems to me that the habitual use of this motive must be injurious both to her own interest, and the good of her children. For what can she gain by thus putting the affection of her child in competition

with his most eager desires and fancies? Is it not evident that, in this struggle for victory, sentiment must often be the loser? And the more frequently this happens, the more likely is it to occur again. There is a native pride, or perhaps perversity, in the human heart, which disposes it to withhold whatever is not its own free-will offering; and consequently the very proof of affection which is required is the one most unwillingly bestowed. By degrees, too, your child will become hardened to your reproaches, and even to your grief, and, should you have recourse to tears, matters will become still worse; your part will appear to him pitiful, and his own odious. Your tears will irritate his temper, but not touch his heart. He will be angry with you as the cause of his own unfeeling conduct; and self-love will render a reconciliation awkward and difficult for both parties. A severe, nay even a despotic authority, is a thousand times better than this everlasting sentimentality, which provokes boys to rebellion, and teaches girls hypocrisy.

The wish to have our love returned, though it must always accompany true affection, does not constitute a principal element in maternal tenderness. This pure feeling — free from all selfishness or eager desire after happiness, and unadulterated by that alloy of vanity which in a greater or less degree characterizes every

other species of love — bestows itself unconditionally, without waiting for a return, and without hope of reward. Our children, destined in the natural course of things to survive us, must learn to live without us during the greatest part of their existence; and when we endeavour to contemplate in imagination the whole of their life, we find ourselves already transported into the pure regions of eternity. The only feeling with respect to them, which should have a personal interest for us, is that of our responsibility, and the account we shall have to render to God of this precious charge. We must be ever ready to say, "Lord, behold me, and the children whom thou hast given me."

But a feeling even stronger than this, and still more calculated to excite the deepest emotion, is that of *their* responsibility; that *they* also will have to appear hereafter before the Supreme Judge. The mere wish that every thing belonging to us should be as perfect as possible, would lead us to seek their improvement; but such are not our ruling motives with regard to them — we are inspired with a far higher feeling. We wish them to be intrinsically good — good without any reference to external objects or circumstances. Nature, conscience, and religion, all teach us to consider their interests as of far more importance than our own; and if some degree of personal feeling

minge with our wishes on this subject, it is because our children are a part—an embellished and more perfect continuation—of ourselves; and it is this mixture of physical instinct, with sentiments of a more elevated nature, which gives to maternal love its peculiar character.

But if our hearts be pre-occupied by the hope of having our affection returned, we lower the character of a mother's holy vocation. Let us not, therefore, by any excessive demonstrations of attachment on our part, appear to seek for a corresponding return from our children; for however natural it may be to us to bestow such overwhelming tenderness, the simplest expressions of it are always the most pleasing to them. Cheerful and unlooked for marks of our love, such as they themselves often display, are what they like; and a mixture of gaiety and affection is much more to their taste, than a grave and sentimental tone of feeling, to which they find it difficult to respond. By occasionally giving a more serious character to our caresses—as for instance, when we intend to show our approbation of their conduct—we prove that they really spring from the emotions of our heart.

On the other hand, if we make the good conduct of our children the test of their affection, what is the consequence? Instead of learning how much importance we attach to

morality itself, they imagine that we are interested in their goodness only as affording us an additional proof of their love. But it may be asked, "How can they know that we take any interest at all in their conduct, unless we show them how much we are distressed by their faults?" If you are indeed grieved by them, your children will easily find it out; and their belief in your sorrow will, perhaps, be the stronger from your saying nothing about it. A very young child said one day to his mother — who had never made the fulfilment of duty a test of affection — "I have not been at all good to-day, and yet I do love you." How much esteem, and how much knowledge of the maternal feelings, was expressed in these simple words.

Endeavour, then, when you have to speak to your children of their faults, to lay aside as much as possible all personal feeling. Addressing yourself to their judgment, or, if necessary, to their conscience, represent things to them in their true light. Their moral feeling, less variable than their affection, sooner recovers from any temporary torpor; nor does it suffer so much from the effects of human caprice. In fact, children seldom openly rebel against moral authority. They may object to some particular duty, but they acknowledge the general idea that there are duties to be performed. Two

single words, *right* and *wrong*, possess in their eyes all the force of law. The one pointing out to them what ought to be done, the other what ought to be avoided. At least I have known but one child — a lively intelligent little girl, of six or seven years old — who ever raised any doubts on this subject; and she, perhaps, after all, was only amusing herself with perplexing those who were lecturing her. Something being mentioned as wrong: "Yes, I know that," she said, "but if it is wrong, what does it signify?" She was told that only wicked people would speak in that way; on which she blushed, and remained silent. Her conscience reproved her; but had it not, knowing as she did that wicked persons do not wish to injure themselves, she might have persisted in the dispute, and asked, "But what does it signify if we injure others?"

Still, although conscience can never be entirely destroyed, it is not a good thing to talk too much about morality; nor is it by words alone that we may prove our high regard for duty. It is what we feel, not what we profess, that interests children; what is understood has often more effect than what is expressed. We may preach all day to no purpose; whilst the happiest impressions are often produced without our being at all aware how they have been given; good and evil are frequently communicated in education without any assignable

cause. Hence it follows that the utmost discretion is necessary in our choice of the means to which we are obliged to have recourse, and that we should carefully husband the resources we possess. And in the application of great principles, the inverse order of their relative importance must be followed. Thus, if common sense be sufficient, let us leave morality out of the question; if the most simple morality will produce the desired effect, let us not appeal to the more refined feelings of conscience; and, lastly, let us call in the assistance of conscience before we have recourse to religion. The influence exerted by the highest motives is far greater when they are kept in the background; they are discerned beyond the others, and without being actually brought forward, contribute to their strength and support.

It seems to me that in general we lecture children too much; we abuse our privilege as monitors, and disgust them with our exhortations and remonstrances. The weariness which they feel gives rise to a spirit of opposition. If we were more careful to keep their minds in a state of tranquillity, their sympathy would very likely never be destroyed; they would be more anxious to please us; their good will and good humour would be displayed in their countenances; and the frank and open expression, with which they have been endowed by nature,



would be preserved: a precious gift — and so effectual a recommendation to confidence, that no human testimony is of equal weight.

We possess, however, as I have before said, no infallible receipt for education. But I shall take this opportunity of explaining more distinctly the use to be made of one resource, to which I have already alluded. As the moral education of the child can be successful only in proportion to the interest which he can be induced to take in it himself, the best plan seems to be, to consult him frequently on the means most likely to conduce to his improvement.

In order to do this effectually, we must not aim at too much at once. Let us choose one distinct object, — a wrong habit to be corrected, a command or a prohibition to be observed; — it signifies little what it is, only we should be careful not to begin with any thing difficult; the essential point is, to obtain success in the first instance. As it is most likely that the object, whatever it may be, has been the subject of former reproof, show that you are determined to put an end to this. Tell the child that at his age it would be disgraceful to be threatened with punishment; and that you will be rejoiced if he can assist you in avoiding this extremity. Then consult him openly on the subject; endeavour with his

assistance to find out some method of recalling to his memory, at the trying moment, the resolution which he is supposed to have made in order to avoid a renewal of his fault. But do not accept from him any promise with regard to this: he is too little master of his feelings to be able to answer for himself, and should not be exposed to the danger of so serious a fault as the violation of his word. With this exception, however, any other means which he may suggest, should be adopted; and he will most likely pique himself on proving their efficacy by his conduct.

Yet should this not be the case, do not be too easily discouraged; sorrowfully, but quietly, tell him that you are now unhappily obliged to have recourse to punishment; and then fix yourself what it shall be; for it would be absurd to allow him to point out how he wishes it to be inflicted. And beware of remitting the punishment in case of a relapse; this would ruin every thing; his consciousness of deserving it will make him submit without a murmur. Afterwards you may again consult with him on the best means of avoiding, for the future, what has given both him and yourself so much pain. By thus proving to him that you do not despair of his improvement, you will raise him in his own estimation; and by firmness and perseverance you will at last succeed in gaining

the desired object, and may then proceed to another.

This method, — which, by adopting a tone of more seriousness and gravity in our consultations with the child, as he advances in age, may be followed for a long time, — possesses the double advantage of giving him an active part to perform in his own reformation, and of never producing a rupture between him and his parents. They rely on the advocate they have in his own breast; and they do not alienate his good will by supposing his intentions to be wrong. No doubt his resolutions are often weak and easily broken; but this is only in accordance with his character as a feeble child, who must be corrected by an appeal to his internal monitor. This monitor loses not his reverence though the pupil fail; the judge only asserts his authority in condemning the criminal; and thus it is that the abstract idea of virtue is preserved, in all its purity and grandeur, although we possess no actual representation of it on earth.

# CHAPTER IV.

## MODES OF CORRECTION AND OF ENCOURAGEMENT.

WE must not deceive ourselves. The most judicious cultivation of good feelings by education is seldom entirely successful. There are seasons when the best motives seem to have lost all power, and the mind appears closed against any salutary impression. At such times children are alike indifferent to good or evil. Faults, committed without regret, lead to no subsequent remorse; and we are consequently obliged to have recourse to the use of external means in order to excite a feeling of repentance. How, indeed, should it be otherwise, when man himself, the image of his Creator, and raised above all other creatures by the gift of reason, continually requires the restraint of outward influences? How few people are there to whom the fear of opinion, or the dread of human laws, is not necessary! And that a child, on whom these fears have little power, should be able, by means of a moral feeling only just awakened, and as yet feebly developed, to repress the most lively and urgent desires, is not to be expected. The

strength in which his good motives are deficient must be supplied by the authority to which he is subjected; and hence it follows, that when our higher means fail in producing the desired effect, we must have recourse to those more common motives by which all human beings are influenced. It then becomes necessary, in order to rouse a sluggish moral feeling, to attach a slight punishment to the transgression of certain laws. We have already alluded to the use of such punishments; but we shall now enter more at large into an examination of them, and consider particularly the effects they are calculated to produce.

Reprimands seem to occupy a sort of middle station between persuasions and punishments, sometimes leaning to the one side, and sometimes to the other. When their chief effect is the grief which they produce, they partake more of the nature of punishment; but considered in this light they are not without some disadvantages.

In order to render a punishment both just and efficacious, it should be announced beforehand, and afterwards applied to a clearly defined case of transgression. But a reproof, depending almost entirely on chance, must always be uncertain and irregular in its action. Even when foreseen, its degree of severity cannot be previously estimated; this must depend entirely,

as regards both parties, on the humour of the moment; and therefore the child, in whose breast hope always predominates, feels little dread of it; yet, the pain which it causes is often very great, though seldom, in my opinion, of a desirable nature.

In every kind of pain there are two things to be considered; its moral, and what may be called its mechanical effect. If the recollection of a disagreeable sensation be associated with a particular action, the repetition of it may thus be prevented, just as a child who has once been burnt avoids touching the fire; but this does not produce any real improvement of character. Besides, when the pain we experience is caused by a fellow-creature, considering it as intentional on his part, we are angry with him, without stopping to consider how far it has been occasioned by our own fault; such a feeling, arising as it does from want of reflection, is particularly natural to children.

In order, therefore, to avoid this disadvantage, parents or instructors sometimes endeavour to conceal their reproofs under the garb of persuasion. They explain the reasons which render them justifiable, and labour to prove his guilt to the culprit. But the more eloquent they are, the more does the child, who is naturally a better judge of feelings than of thoughts, suspect that they find a sort of satisfaction in

this display of their oratorical powers. Their energetic eloquence, especially if other persons be present during the harangue, defeats its own end ; and, whilst those who are only unconcerned auditors may be deeply moved by it, the unhappy criminal — the object of general indignation — sees in it only a proof of the pleasure taken in his humiliation. At some future time he may, perhaps, recognize the moral force of the admonition ; but at the moment he allows this torrent of words to pass by him like a storm, sheltering himself as well as he can under the cover of indifference or resentment.

The pain thus inflicted is therefore not only useless, but absolutely injurious ; it irritates and discomposes the child. No doubt guilt must be followed by suffering ; this is the intention of Providence, and is continually manifested even in this world. But, at any rate, this act of the parent's authority should not seem voluntary on his part ; and above all, the exercise of it should be entirely free from any thing like an appearance of triumph. There is both more dignity, and more hope of success, in a simple expression of disapprobation on the discovery of a fault, accompanied by a declaration that all further explanation is reserved for a calmer moment, than in any reprimands,

When a child perceives that his feelings have

been considered, his gratitude is excited, and his heart opened to persuasion. Then it is that an attentive examination, both of the temptation by which he has been overcome, and of the motives which should have enabled him to resist it, may be extremely useful. The impression he receives from such a lesson of practical morality will not be easily effaced. A reprimand, therefore, in order to be really beneficial, should be divided, and given at two different times. One great disadvantage generally attending reproofs is, that, by their frequent repetition, children are led to despair of gaining our approbation, and sometimes even to lose all self-esteem; in which case there is great danger that from their volatility, and their urgent need of happiness, they may learn to be satisfied without either the one or the other. We ought, therefore, carefully to avoid distressing them, when it would be injurious to their moral feeling that they should find consolation for themselves.

In comparing the effect of harsh reproofs, with that produced by punishments of a physical nature, I am far, however, from advocating the use of the latter. Such as are trifling, are only confessions of our weakness — of our inability to manage our children — and the more severe are necessarily excluded from all enlightened education. We have nothing to do here with those distressing and ignominious chastise-



ments, which, independently of the remorse they are intended to excite, are in themselves so absolutely painful; and of which the future consequences, producing a feeling sometimes of exasperation, sometimes of hatred, are no less deplorable than the present effect is grievous. But the punishments to which I refer are intended only to furnish an example of that loss or suspension of happiness which in human life generally follows ill conduct.

A judicious punishment possesses one great advantage over any reproof conveyed in words. Should your child become indifferent to it, no evil consequences ensue: other modes of punishment may be resorted to; but should he become equally indifferent to the parental voice, the evil is both much greater and much more difficult to remedy. What would you then have in reserve against that period of youth, when the time for employing secondary means shall be past?

A punishment decreed beforehand, and inflicted when the specified fault is committed, places a sort of barrier between the culprit and his offended parent, which opposes any excess of indulgence, and renders violent expressions of anger unnecessary. The father punishes, not as a satisfaction to his own feelings, but that he may be true to his word, which no consideration should ever tempt him to violate. He

himself will often be really grieved at the distress he causes; and this feeling makes him wear a gentle aspect in the eyes of his child. But the punishment must never be remitted: this would only tend to make his government appear arbitrary; and, when at last obliged to inflict it, he might be considered capricious or cruel. It is not so much the severity, as the certainty of a punishment, which renders it efficacious. If there be the least doubt as to its being executed, children not only willingly encounter the risk, but are even pleasurably excited by the idea of setting it at defiance. What we ought particularly to guard against with regard to punishments, is, the supposition that, by increasing their severity, we shall obtain what we were unable to accomplish at first. When a child has once submitted to chastisement of any kind, we ought to take it for granted that he is corrected; and, laying aside all idea of further threatenings, grant an entire pardon. This observation applies particularly to the case of obstinacy. When a determined resolution is shown not to obey a command, it is more than doubtful whether any good will result from obliging a child to do so. If we have recourse to violence for this purpose, we render him cowardly; fear triumphs over courage, and physical over moral feeling; and thus an agency is destroyed, frequently misapplied, no doubt,

but the want of which may sometimes be regretted. This is a case in which punishment, if necessary, is perfectly justifiable; but, having inflicted it, do not afterwards insist on the performance of the point in dispute; do not even allude to it; by making the child submit to your chastisement, you have sufficiently asserted your rights. You have saved your own dignity, without offending his.

On the other hand, when an obstinate refusal is not to be apprehended, no punishment carries with it such an appearance of justice as insisting on the fulfilment of the duty which has been neglected; and, next to this, the most natural one seems to be the privation of some pleasure. This, indeed, considering how eagerly children desire amusement, might sometimes appear almost too severe an infliction; but it possesses an inestimable advantage in the time which it affords for reflection, and consequently for improvement. That every fault deserves to be punished is an idea entertained so generally, that it may almost be termed innate; and hence the supposition naturally follows, that the patient endurance of punishment on account of an offence ought in some degree to diminish the intensity of our remorse. Thus, children feel as if they were less guilty when they have submitted without a murmur to the penal consequences of their fault; and this very feeling

contains in itself a principle of reformation : for the suffering which appears just in the eyes of the culprit himself, and which is alleviated by the hope he entertains that, by correcting his conduct, he shall be spared such pain in future, is truly a regenerating grief.

The only punishments, then, which can ever be really useful in education, are those which are followed by a period of tranquillity. If neither time nor favourable circumstances be allowed for reflection, the pain produced by punishment will only irritate the temper, and spoil the character. On this account solitary confinement, of short duration, may be useful ; but I quite agree with M. Guizot, who recommends that, even when thus confined, children should be required to do something. The punishment does not consist in the obligation to work : on the contrary, it is alleviated by employment, as furnishing the only means which the poor recluse can have, of endeavouring to regain the favour of his parents. Unless we have in our previous instruction held out the deceitful hope of pleasure as an actuating motive, there will be no inconsistency in exacting work as a duty ; and the moral effect of such application must be good for the child : it will dissipate any remains of ill-humour, and, by obliging him to exercise his reason, may, perhaps, lead him to self-reflection.

At the same time all punishments are so painful, the repetition of them is so clearly prohibited both by feeling and good sense, that we must perforce resort occasionally to reprimands. We have before said, that it is both wrong and injudicious to employ these at the moment when the passions are excited ; yet it must be owned that a sudden burst of indignation seems to carry with it its own excuse, and, from being unexpected and involuntary, is much sooner forgiven. Children especially, who have no implacability in their dispositions, soon forget these ebullitions of anger. But nothing is so odious to them, nothing so irritating to their feelings, as any thing like irony, or taunting indirect insinuations. Such unforeseen attacks wound them deeply, change their joy into bitterness, and seem to them a species of treachery. By speaking to them openly of their faults, we show that we consider them worthy of our confidence, and accessible to reason ; they are then able to reply to us. But how can they in any way defend themselves, when they are wounded, without the appearance of being attacked ?

Mothers are sometimes led to employ this method with their children from a feeling of timidity ; they flatter themselves that, by adopting a tone of pleasantry they shall prevent an open quarrel ; and they imagine that in this

way correction may be made agreeable to a child. But this is a complete delusion. Severity itself is not so displeasing as false gaiety; if we have a serious meaning—and what more serious meaning can a mother have than the desire to inspire her children with good feelings?—it cannot be concealed under any form of words. And this affectation of gaiety tends to give an irritating effect to the most reasonable intentions, and frequently only serves to alienate the affections.

Yet let me not be misunderstood. In thus deprecating a spirit of ironical bantering, I am far from wishing to blame that innocent playfulness which, arising from satisfaction and cordial union, and being in fact merely a gay expression of harmony and attachment, tends to enliven and embellish the domestic circle;—I refer only to that cold raillery to which children dare not or cannot reply. Before we venture on any species of pleasantry, we should feel assured that we are really in the humour for it ourselves; otherwise it will always be accompanied with a degree of bitterness.

By an injudicious use of ridicule parents run great risk of endangering their authority. A child who possesses a turn for *répârtée* may sometimes gain the advantage in this encounter of wits; though, at the same time, his answers, however keen, may be so guarded as to furnish

no excuse for reproof. But on no account whatever should such a state of things be allowed to continue for a single moment. We must instantly break off the conversation, and put a stop to a strife of words which is lowering to our authority. Let us own that we were to blame in making use of pleasantry with a child, who cannot employ it himself with propriety, and then let us resume that superiority of station from which we ought never to have descended. It is absolutely necessary to check at once the slightest want of respect; the least neglect of this duty is often attended with deplorable consequences.

The open and direct reproofs which I have been recommending should, if possible, be always given when no witnesses are present. The judgment formed by others of our conduct may often be incorrect as applied to the whole of it, and yet may serve to throw a stronger light on particular parts, and of this advantage should be taken; when opinion proclaims aloud the sentence which conscience had only spoken in a whisper, the heart is forcibly opened to a conviction of the truth; and the judgment pronounced by others, becomes a sort of external conscience palpable to our senses. But the joint reproaches of these two monitors are dreadful — insupportable, — shame is a state of moral purgatory for children. Having so little

notion of futurity, they feel present distresses with a degree of poignancy which we the less suspect from their being able so quickly to throw them off again.

Sometimes, however, our domestic peace is disturbed by faults of a much more serious nature, and productive of much more injurious consequences. There are trying seasons and anxious difficulties in education, to which, indeed, careful and attentive parents are less liable than others, but which no one can feel any certainty of entirely escaping. In families where boys are allowed a degree of liberty which is, in my opinion, generally beneficial, it sometimes happens that the temptations to which they are exposed are too strong for their virtue. Errors arising from thoughtlessness are of little consequence; but if a child of ten or eleven years old commit a more serious fault, — if, moreover, he have been led by it into a long train of deceit, what a painful blow is inflicted by the discovery! What is to be done? Our confidence is destroyed; we can no longer trust either his sincerity or his affection; we are totally at a loss how to proceed, and hardly recognize our child.

What then, I again ask, must we do? In the first instance, nothing at all. Let us not precipitate matters — let us restrain any immediate explosion even of just anger. The child will be more



struck by our surprise, our silent grief, and the idea of a punishment which is suspended, but not averted, than by any violent burst of indignation. Any thing unknown or mysterious possesses a terrifying power which fills his imagination with dread. We must, however, confess that, when such misfortunes as these happen, parents cannot be entirely exculpated from blame: their early physical cares should have been succeeded by a moral vigilance equally constant and active. Children have so little guile, their intentions and feelings are betrayed in so many different ways, that it is almost impossible for a watchful parent not to observe every change that takes place in them, and not to discover the secret root whence such bitter fruits have sprung. But sorrowful as the consolation afforded by the idea that such faults are the consequences of parental neglect may be, still it is a consolation: so great is our affection for these cherished beings, that it is a comfort to us to feel that we must bear our share in the burden—that we may blame them less, and ourselves more. We submit to the affliction which we feel that we have deserved; and, with an humble acquiescence in the decrees of a just God, venture to implore his mercy. Though culpable in his sight, we may depend on his assistance. He pities both us and our children. He alone can enable us to adopt such plans as

are equally free from passion and from weakness; and can make us the instruments, by which a happy reformation may be effected in the hearts of our children.

To accomplish this reformation must be our great object; and we must spare no pains to make it permanently effectual. Whatever judgment we pronounce, we must take care that the punishment determined on be neither trifling nor childish. The common routine of education must for a time be forsaken, and everything about us be changed. If any amusements had been projected, they must be given up. All the other children should be partakers in the grief, and even the innocent be involved in the general affliction. When a brother is in sorrow, can any of the family rejoice? Does not the disgrace of one affect all? Instead of the pleasant lessons which would have been given in happier times, let us impose some more serious tasks on the culprit; and, paying no attention for the present to the minor details of instruction, let a silent gravity be maintained by all.

Yet this state of things must not be allowed to continue too long. There might, in that case, be some danger of the child's becoming accustomed to it; and that capacity for enjoyment, so inherent to this age, would soon regain the ascendancy. If the favourable moment for reconciliation be suffered to pass by, they will soon

learn to console themselves. Christianity, which reconciles us to God, teaches us the secret of forgiving others.

Let our forgiveness be openly, and, if possible, affectionately granted. Nothing tends so much to soften the heart, and lead it to repentance, as kindness: but though anxious not to overwhelm him with despair, we must not conceal from the child the momentous importance of the situation in which he is placed; and we must show him that we are resolutely determined not to afford him any opportunity of a second fall. Some new arrangement may be made, with his concurrence, which will naturally include in its conditions a breaking off of intercourse with some of his companions — an alteration in the employment of particular hours — and a more firm and strict watchfulness over his daily life. No doubt it will be some time before the shade of sorrow which has been thrown over our intercourse will be entirely dispelled; but we should, as soon as possible, resume our old cordiality of manner. A return to our former habits, even of finding fault, will be welcomed. I have known a little girl, after such a period of coolness as I have been describing, shed tears of joy and tenderness on her mother's giving her a slight reproof.

A crisis of this nature, judiciously treated, is ten productive of the happiest results. One

fault thus completely unveiled will frequently open the child's eyes to his secret errors; his behaviour becomes both more open and more humble; and his conduct no longer consists of a series of petty attempts at transgression and rebellion, by which his conscience is kept in a state of continual uneasiness. The parent, too, has gained more insight into his child's disposition, and may hope every thing from him, if he have been led to feel, not merely the mortification of self-love, but genuine repentance. The greatest attention, however, is still necessary; the light which is thrown on his character must not have shone in vain; the intimations thus given are sometimes confirmed many years afterwards; we must forgive, but not forget.

We shall not be detained long by the consideration of the subject of rewards. This mode of encouragement, which, as it is generally employed in public institutions we have represented as too powerful in its action, is comparatively weak and inactive in private education. Stripped of the *éclat* which renders them so flattering to vanity, and reduced to their intrinsic value, rewards soon cease to afford much delight. Yet even after the imagination, which much sooner destroys our pleasures than our pains, has robbed them of their charms, the privation of them is a subject of regret; so that, in fact, we have instituted a system, not of rewards, but of punish-

ments. Besides, the more gentle the plan of education pursued, the fewer recompenses have parents to bestow; for they voluntarily give their children every desirable gratification, and any other are, of course, entirely out of the question.

There are, however, more serious objections to the use of such stimulants. They may certainly be sometimes employed with advantage; as, for instance, when we wish to correct or to encourage such habits as have little to do with the will: but, when we approach the region of morality, we feel that they are totally at variance with the true object of education. We degrade the idea of duty if we do not represent it as entirely obligatory—if we allow children to imagine that in fulfilling it, they are performing something meritorious. It may be said that it is very desirable to inspire them with good feelings — but of what value is a good feeling which has been excited only by the hope of reward? By thus deteriorating the purity of their motives, we corrupt the source of all morality.

Even when a reward is merely honorary, its effect on the heart is not often of a salutary nature. Vanity is always fostered by success; but our aim should be to repress this feeling as much as possible. Let us then bestow our approbation, and even rewards if necessary, on such efforts as are purely intellectual, or on

success in such branches of education as are connected with duty only through the medium of filial obedience; but when any thing is absolutely commanded by duty itself, let us think better of our child than to reward him for obeying its dictates.

And as to those happy inspirations, those bursts of good feeling, which seem at times to pass the bounds of mere duty, and prompt to really generous actions, we should gratefully thank Heaven that our children are capable of them; but never let us flatter ourselves that such happy impulses can be taught. To show an expectation of them would only tend to impede their soaring flight; and to reward them would be an affront. But when a child has behaved in a truly praiseworthy manner, our joy cannot, and need not, be concealed: it is natural that such pleasure should be imparted; and in giving some striking proof of it, we are doing only what is perfectly right. Let the feeling of happiness, which we are unable to repress, be displayed by the announcement of some great and unexpected favour, in which the whole family may be partakers. When the purity of the motives which have led to any act of virtue cannot be doubted, we may safely indulge ourselves in augmenting its happy consequences.

It has sometimes been proposed to make the pleasure of doing good the reward of good conduct ; as, for example, to promise that, after a week's trial, the child who has behaved the best shall be allowed to assist some poor family. This sounds at first very delightful; but if it form an exclusive distinction, or if it be tinged with the slightest shade of vain-glory, there is much more of evil than good in the plan. Benevolence cannot be too closely allied with modesty; even the opinion of mere men of the world, not in general very remarkable for its strictness, is extremely rigorous on this point. Let us then procure for our children, since it is permitted by their Heavenly Father, this sweetest of all pleasures ; but let them understand that they have done nothing to deserve it: and as the employment of rewards unfortunately always tends to inspire some degree of vanity, let us beware how we propose such as will excite a vanity which is ridiculous and unpardonable.

It does not seem to me that the slight attacks of natural and childish vanity which may sometimes be observed in young people, are nearly so injurious, either in a religious or moral point of view, as that pride which is associated with the pleasure of having fulfilled a duty. What I dread more than any thing else is *well-founded*

*self-love.* In it I behold an indelible stain, an alloy, debasing the finest qualities of the heart. No true grandeur, no forgetfulness of self, any longer exists; and that eternal monosyllable *I* constantly predominates.



## CHAPTER V.

## EMPLOYMENT OF TIME.

By attaching importance to the employment of each moment, an idea of duty seems to be extended over the whole of life; and a natural connection is formed between moral and intellectual education. In the present age, more especially, so completely one of business and associations, exactness in observing every arrangement depending on time is absolutely necessary in social life, and possesses many advantages even in childhood. Unless children have acquired habits of punctuality, they will neither possess ease of mind while at their recreations, nor make any certain progress in their studies.

We shall not here enter very minutely into the subject of the distribution of their different occupations; nor must any particular directions be taken in a strictly literal sense. Such an infinite diversity of arrangements must be rendered necessary by varieties in situation, health, fortune, or residence, and by the greater or less power possessed by different parents of devoting their time to the education

of their children, that I shall content myself with laying down a few general rules, which seem to me applicable to every arrangement.

Every child has what may be termed two different modes of existence. In the one his time is entirely at the disposal of his instructor; in the other, under certain restrictions, at his own. Whenever it has been attempted to subject him to perpetual superintendence, the effect has been injurious; his will has been enervated from want of exercise: continually obliged to submit to the control of others, all internal energy has been destroyed; having always been directed, he has never learnt to act for himself; and his morality is of a completely passive character.

We are often deceived in the opinion we form as to these two conditions. Observing a child able to read, write, and calculate — in short, to perform the same things that we do — we conclude at once that his reason may also be compared with ours on these points. Yet its developement is often the greatest in those things in which he does not resemble us at all: he is frequently a man in his amusements, whilst still a child at his lessons.

And why is this? Because what we mean by the expression *acting like a man*, is that he should propose to himself some definite object, and choose certain means in order to attain it;

and that he should consider both the object and the means under various points of view, whether as regarding morality, present pleasure, or future utility. With respect to education, the nature of the task is of far less importance, than the disposition of the person by whom it is performed. When its whole arrangement is predetermined by the instructor, nothing remains for the pupil to do, but to push on, more or less eagerly, in the appointed path. But surely this is imposing far too much restraint on the exercise of the will.

If the free choice of children could ever be brought to agree exactly with what we should have chosen for them, this would be the perfection of education. But even if this great object were attained, we could hardly be aware of it, as long as they are not allowed a single moment of independence. By their manner of acting when exposed to temptation, we ascertain what effect has been produced by our lessons of morality; and by the use they make of their leisure time, we discover whether they are interested in their studies; for the ideas with which they have then been pleased, will be reproduced under a thousand different forms in their sports. It is only when they are left to themselves that children show what their real characters are; and that opportunities of

making observations on them are afforded to their instructors.

It may perhaps be asked, how any observations can be made unless the instructor be present? But he will experience little difficulty in gaining such information as he desires. The various incidents to which a state of freedom gives birth, the advice which is required by an individual, or the want of an umpire which is felt by children collectively, will, at least if he have previously encouraged their naturally communicative disposition, afford him ample means of gaining an insight into their characters; and at any rate unexpected events will be continually occurring. But when one, to whom they are accustomed to look up with respect, is constantly present, everything seems at a stand: they think only of his opinion, and refer everything to his judgment; so that as long as he remains an ocular witness, there is nothing for him to see. Could we rely implicitly on the power of habit, the simple continuance of good conduct, whether voluntary or not, might be of some importance. But, besides the uncertainty in which this would involve us, any species of constraint tends so much to retard the developement both of mind and body, that in this point of view alone it must be injurious to the great end of all education.

As regards the exercise of the physical powers of children, nothing can make up for the want of that free and energetic use of them, which arises entirely from their own will. Lessons in gymnastics, dancing, fencing, &c., are all very good in their way; but they require a certain amount of attention: they do not afford room for unrestrained bursts of active enjoyment, and at the same time they produce greater fatigue.

Notwithstanding the attention which has latterly been paid to physical education, much remains to be done. Though mothers seem to have redoubled their care, yet it has been truly observed by M. Remusat, that women are more feeble and delicate, and less equal to the trials they are destined by nature to undergo, than formerly. Perhaps one cause for this may be found in the very excess of the care bestowed on them. The mother's watchfulness has been too constant, too minute, and the regular exercises which she has imposed have ill supplied the place of those which spring from the eager impulse of the moment.

But the principal fault, and one which applies to all children, is, that far too much time is devoted, at a very early age, to lessons. This fault, too, is one which completely defeats its own end; for nothing tends so much to deaden all intellectual vivacity. In the extensive establishment for education at Hofwyl, to which

children are sent from all quarters of the world, it has constantly been remarked by the instructors, that those pupils, who, on their arrival, have been found backward in intellectual acquirements, but strong and vigorous in bodily health, have in a very short time outstripped their companions, and continued afterwards to maintain the advantage they had gained; while those who were much more advanced in their studies, but of a delicate constitution, have soon lost their precocious superiority.

In private education liberty is always a concession of authority; and a parent should never resign his right to replace under restraint a child whose conduct is not satisfactory, or who does not make a proper use of the time which is placed at his own disposal. Not that he should be required always to have some distinct end in view — always to be doing something. There are times when, either from the peculiar state of his health, or from a premature taste for contemplation, complete repose is absolutely necessary for children. But it is very easy to discover by their moral tranquillity, when a condition of idleness should be tolerated in them. When we see them free from all excitement or teasing restlessness, yet without any appearance of heaviness or stupidity — in short, in a state of serenity — let us leave them to its undisturbed enjoyment. But if they are not only idle,

but uneasy, wearisome both to themselves and others, we may be sure this arises from a superfluity of animal spirits and strength, which requires to be employed; and as they are not able to make use of it themselves, we must resume our right to do so for them. We should contrive to have some occupation, however trivial, in readiness for such occasions; but care should be taken that it is one so little likely to produce fatigue, as to afford no excuse for a refusal. Even winding a skein of silk is better than being given up to a state of moral disorder.

One thing which should always be remembered is, that childhood is not so much a particular age, as a state; and that whenever the will becomes ill-regulated, violent, or unreasonable, we fall again into this state. All human beings, whatever may be their age, are liable to this relapse, and its baneful influences are often felt by society. But when he, who thus falls, is not an independent being, those who have a right to assume authority over him are called upon to exercise it within due bounds. A careful father, therefore, will never entirely resign the power with which he has been entrusted by human laws. Even while living together on the most cordial terms, the idea of his supremacy must never be lost sight of either by himself or his children; they must feel perfectly sure that whatever be their age, or size,

if they behave as children, they will be treated as children. But another and more agreeable consequence, resulting from this same feeling, is, that at every age they will also be allowed a degree of liberty proportioned to the growing development of their reason.

In fact, an increase of liberty seems to be the most natural reward for good conduct; and it affords at the same time a means of leading to the fulfilment of higher duties — such as are more deserving of being thus denominated. This may seem to require some explanation. We easily understand that liberty is essential to our enjoyment; but we do not sufficiently comprehend how necessary it is to our morality. Yet it is perfectly certain that without it there could be no virtue.

If a being could be supposed to exist in a state of such abject slavery, that all his actions were the result of external force, it is plain that he could not be considered a responsible creature; he would be a mere machine. In this point of view lessons can hardly be reckoned among the duties of children, as they are obligatory on them; the only merit a child can have with regard to them is in the desire he shows to profit by them. As long as he is in the presence of an absolute master, even his obedience possesses no moral value; but it begins to acquire some merit when he is no



longer under the eyes of his instructor. Thus we see that every additional degree of liberty tends to increase the growth of morality.

Yet the most praiseworthy obedience is not altogether satisfactory: it is always accompanied by a degree of restraint, because the child, when deficient in it, is liable to reproof. But as he must at some future time trace out for himself his own line of duty, it would be very desirable, that at the age when the foundation of all his future conduct must be laid, we should endeavour to make him feel the necessity of imposing certain duties on himself.

This forms a delicate and important part of education; it is a much easier task to arrange every thing — to assign to every duty its particular place and time, — than to accomplish the fulfilment of them from choice. Very often, indeed, every thing goes on in a sort of regular train: after a pupil has been made to do the same thing for many years in succession, he may continue the practice, from the mere force of habit, during the rest of his life; and may even feel uncomfortable if it be omitted. Nor can there be any possible harm in making use of mechanical means in order to regulate that part of our existence which is itself mechanical. But at the same time by adopting this plan we expose ourselves to the danger of substituting factitious obligations for real duties.

And this seems to me the proper time for making a series of experiments, and entering into a thorough examination of a child. While he is yet so young, and his moral feelings have consequently made so little progress that we are obliged to be satisfied with a mere passive obedience, his simple observance of the rules we have laid down will entitle him to our approbation. But as he advances in age, and his moral faculties become more fully developed, we are justified in requiring something more from him. If he can be made to understand that the condition in which man is placed obliges him to lay down certain laws for his own government—or if he should discover from his own experience that it is possible for him so to conduct himself that no restraint on our part would be necessary, and that our only task would be that of enlightening his understanding,—he might perhaps be led to take a deep interest in his own education.

In order to facilitate its success, we may begin by allowing the child such a superfluity of leisure as will afford him ample time, not only for his amusement, but for the performance of some actions, which may not be particularly agreeable to him. These, however, must have been previously pointed out to him; for, when left to themselves, children exercise their activity only in what gives them pleasure. Thus

many little things may be required from him, which are rather matters of expediency than of strict necessity; such as taking care of any specified articles, or finishing some piece of work which had been undertaken with eagerness, but laid aside from want of perseverance. And, in order that he may have some merit in the execution of this task, a certain latitude of time should be allowed him; and a week or more be suffered to elapse before he is asked whether it is performed. If it then appear that he has not done it, the extra time which had been granted to him must be taken away, and he must be replaced under a more strict superintendence.

As the struggle between inclination and duty lasts as long as life itself, children should be accustomed almost from infancy to sustain it. Where the morality of the question admits of no dispute, there will be no contest: but few, of whatever age, escape some painful conflict on trifling occasions, where neither heart nor conscience give any distinct award. Yet, if the habit of listening even to the softest whispers of these monitors be once lost, the bloom of delicate feeling will soon fade away. Every thing depends on the various obligations by which we are governed; and we are forced sometimes to impose shackles on ourselves which cannot but be painful. Our very virtues

themselves would become deficient in strength, if we were continually carried away by our feelings.

With respect to the disposal of time, it seems to me that, during the period of transition which we are now considering, such occasional and desultory instruction, as we consider best suited to the powers of infancy, should be combined in due proportions with that more precise and continued application which is required at a later age: for this purpose some lessons must be regularly given; and, with regard to these, too much punctuality cannot be observed. As both master and pupil are equally bound to the exact observance of any regulation on this subject, it gives the idea of a reciprocal obligation, prevents any opposition, and by excluding all supposition of caprice promotes a spirit of peace and harmony. This is one of the laws to which the child who is allowed a large proportion of individual liberty must be made to submit as soon as possible.

That lessons should be both given and received with lively interest forms an essential point in education: the instructor must use the utmost care, and task all his powers of invention, in order to keep up his pupil's attention: all success in instruction depends on this. The interest thus excited prevents any feeling of fatigue, and is even physically useful; so that,

however paradoxical it sounds, we may truly say that intellectual education is often not intellectual enough; and the evil begins from the moment when it ceases to be so. Observe a child idling over his books, or for ever dragging them about with him: his pale cheeks, swollen eyes, and fits of yawning, show that he is sinking into a state of both mental and bodily torpor, and is no longer in the full enjoyment of his existence. But let this state, so injurious to his health, his morality, and his intellect, be at once, and by every possible means, put an end to. Until the pupil has acquired a habit of attentive and earnest application, let all his lessons be too short to give him the slightest disgust; and when they become easier to him, do not at first make him work for a longer period, but require more work to be done in the same time. If he have a lesson to learn by heart, let him read it aloud: if at the end of a given time he cannot say it, desire him to read it over again a certain number of times, but without making him repeat it afterwards. Even this slight punishment will not be often necessary: a child who has any feeling of honour, and who finds his task limited, both as to quantity and time, will pique himself on accomplishing it: he will perform it with cheerfulness, as well as zeal, and his health will remain uninjured.

It does not, however, always happen that children relish the most obligatory and indispensable parts of education : an occasional and varied instruction is often much more to their taste ; but the difficulty is to manage the introduction of such a mode of teaching without intrenching on their liberty. They are taken up with the execution of their own designs, and have no inclination to interest themselves in our projects. The best plan, and one which possesses besides the recommendation of perfect sincerity, is for the instructor to reserve at his own disposal a certain hour in every day, or week, without specifying beforehand how it is to be employed. This time may be appropriated to such occupations as might perhaps disturb the regularity of fixed lessons, and yet are calculated to inspire a taste for study ; such, for instance, as the practical application of what has been hitherto taught only theoretically ; and its beneficial effects would soon be acknowledged. In the country, drawing out plans, making and sending up balloons, excursions combined with the study of natural history, gardening, agricultural employment of any kind,—and in town, visits to museums, manufactories, workshops, &c., would each furnish amusing and instructive occupations : while the long winter evenings might be employed in any little ingenious exercises of

manual dexterity, calculated to make them neat and skilful in the use of their hands.

On these occasions, too, there would be no impropriety in the introduction of those instructive games, which we deprecated when used as a means, of cheating children into learning; there would now be no attempt at deceit, but the intention of the games would be openly declared. This does not diminish their power of amusing; and it seldom happens that some benefit may not be derived from them. If they are not always calculated to afford information on particular subjects, they may favour the general development of the understanding. Some of them demand presence of mind and quickness of repartee: others exercise the discriminating faculties, by requiring an explanation of the remote relations of things to each other, or an analysis of ideas similar to what is employed in scientific researches; and others draw largely on the powers of the memory. Many bodily exercises may also be classed under the head of amusements. Some of these sports accustom children to the endurance of corporeal pain, and teach them also to bear with equanimity little annoyances to their self-love; and all these recreations promote that gaiety which is so natural and so salutary to childhood.

When the instructor has determined the pro-

portion of time to be devoted respectively to independence and subjection, and has also fixed what lessons are to be given, it may be as well to consult the pupil himself as to the arrangement of his different occupations. His views on this subject are often such as might not occur to us. His amusements vary with the changing seasons, just as his studies are also varied to suit the progress of the system of education which we have laid down. Hence combinations are required, the necessity of which he easily comprehends, and to which he submits with a better grace when he has himself assisted in forming them. And thus with his aid a *time-table* may be drawn out, subject to such alterations as may be found desirable in the course of the year.

Yet variable as human plans always are, they are never more so than when applied to education. Children require at times a degree of consideration, not always sufficiently attended to. There are seasons when, without our being at all aware that their health is affected, they seem utterly incapable of any exertion. At such times, from the ignorance of those about them as to the real cause of their state, they are often fretted by reproofs and remonstrances: yet there can be little doubt that they are under the dominion of some physical influence; and our wisest plan is patiently to suffer them to stand still for a while, and to con-



gratulate ourselves if they do not seem to retrograde : and then, considering ourselves for the time more as physicians than instructors, to adopt such measures as may restore them to their usual state of moral and physical health.

I must once more repeat that these are hints, rather than specific directions, and that I attach little importance to minute details. What appears to me absolutely essential is, to induce the formation of habits of order, without impeding the free exercise of the will ; to make the child himself as much as possible a party in the conception and execution of our plans ; gradually to afford his reason and conscience such opportunities of displaying themselves, as may prove what effect religious feelings and our instruction have produced ; and lastly, to allow the young machine frequently to go of itself, and to observe carefully how it works, whilst we have yet the power of taking it again, if necessary, under our own guidance.

If the pupil become, what I delight in imagining him, he will at ten years old be a civilized, but perfectly unsophisticated being ; and his well-regulated and active life will present a picture of constant happiness. Having commenced the day by raising his thoughts to God in prayer, this act of devotion will render the idea of his duties, — an idea continually en-

larging itself and increasing in energy, — more pleasing to him, and will prepare him for the hour of lessons, when his resolutions will be put to the test, and his sincerity in forming them proved. The regular lessons will be succeeded by various exercises, which, though of an instructive tendency, may, from the animated pleasure which they excite, be almost reckoned amusements, and may also serve to show him that study is by no means incompatible with enjoyment. And if, during the time which is allowed for complete recreation, he is led to make some sacrifices to duty, he will experience that heart-felt satisfaction which always attends the free exercise of conscience. Having all his faculties awakened, and being always ready for performing, learning, or undertaking any thing, he will possess that elasticity and vigour which ever accompany a healthy state of mind and body; nor will the interest he takes in his employments be the result of an egotistical vanity. His earnest wish, not only as regards his studies, but with respect to his whole conduct, will be to satisfy his parents, to obey God, and to approach as nearly as possible to that ideal image which he has pictured to himself, and to the excellencies of which he is continually adding, as he himself makes further advances towards perfection.

## CHAPTER VI.

PRACTICAL RULES FOR THE CULTIVATION OF THE  
FACULTIES OF ATTENTION AND REASON.

WE have seen that, during the period which intervenes between seven years old and ten, the time devoted to instruction must be continually increased : it now remains for us to trace the effect of this on the development of the intellectual faculties. We shall not dwell much at length on this part of our subject, and shall confine our observations principally to such points as seem yet unsettled, or as appear to have been generally too much overlooked in education.

The exercise of the faculty of attention,—at once the cause and the medium of all intellectual activity,—has always been acknowledged as an object of so much importance in education, that having already made it the subject of our consideration when treating of the earliest period of childhood, we might almost trust to the different modes of teaching for accomplishing the remainder of the task. Yet a few additional

remarks seem to be suggested by the more advanced age at which we have now arrived.

That the will exerts an almost arbitrary influence on the attention, is a fact, the truth of which is confirmed by our daily experience. A child suspends the train of his own childish thoughts, when obliged to apply to his lessons; and we ourselves, when any urgent demand is made on our attention either for the purpose of deliberation or action, learn to throw aside whatever was previously occupying our mind.

But though this truth is so perfectly established, it does not seem equally certain that its various bearings on human conduct have been sufficiently considered.

It would be flattering ourselves too much to believe that the will is in this respect all-powerful; but, to a certain extent, the moral powers are as capable of being augmented as the physical. To make the best possible use of our faculties, and to apply for aid to the source whence they all spring, are two duties, the observation of which constitutes sincere devotedness to religion. We know too well that we must expect in educating our children to find their will unequal, intermittent, and capricious; but we trust that these fits of moral disorder will gradually become, not only less frequent and shorter in duration, but also less injurious in their consequences.

If a child have been induced to take an interest in his own moral improvement, some useful exercises, with a view to its further advancement, may be proposed to him. After having shown him, by referring to the interest he takes in his amusements and his lessons, that he has the power of fixing his attention on particular objects when he chooses, we may point out to him the wisdom of occupying his mind with some pleasing and innocent subject, in a time of temptation or trouble ; and by a steady perseverance in watching over him, questioning and encouraging him on such occasions, some good can hardly fail to ensue.

Indeed this is no more than frequently occurs in the course of nature. Some happily constituted beings are able to banish all painful thoughts from their breasts ; others, from a higher feeling, repulse all ideas of an immoral tendency. But these are not common characters. And if by our care we can obtain what is often the result of simple nature, education may indeed glory in her work. The question here is, whether children may be accustomed, by the regular exercise of their will, to command their attention in the general conduct of life. Were this once proved, the secret of obtaining every thing truly good would be revealed to us ; but we have not sufficient data on which to ground this supposition with any certainty.

Putting aside, then, this very important question, there are, no doubt, a variety of methods by which, even during those hours not devoted to study, the faculty of attention may be either weakened or strengthened. What is more fatal to it than any thing else is the multiplicity, confusion, and indistinctness of the objects presented to the understanding, or even to the senses only. Trifling reading, unheeded conversations, any thing, in short, which dissipates the powers of the mind, or inspires a feeling of listlessness, is injurious to this faculty, on which so many others depend. In providing the intellect with nourishment, we should be careful so to proportion it as always to excite a wish, — a longing — for more. By leading children at an early age to examine certain objects during their walks, such as the general aspect of the country, the state of its cultivation, the external appearance of the population, &c., and by afterwards listening with apparent interest to their remarks, we accustom them to make use of their eyes and understanding, — a most valuable but not very common habit.

The great object in every different employment should be to prevent distraction of mind ; and in this, unfortunately, we can succeed only by means of that very will, which is itself so lamentably uncertain in its action. In the first instance, the pupil's intentions are generally

good ; but if anything, however trifling, seem to break the chain of his ideas, the student disappears, and gives way to the child, eager only after amusement. Hence it is that the talents of the instructor are so constantly put in requisition to devise methods of keeping the attention alive ; and thus the numerous advantages of public education are sometimes balanced by the power which private education affords of choosing both methods and masters to be employed. If the development either of all the intellectual faculties, or of only a part of them, be tardy, we possess an inestimable advantage in being able to change our plans according to circumstances. In some minds, no interest, and consequently no attention, is excited by literary instruction ; on others, neither emulation nor any of the common methods employed in schools have any influence. Three different dispositions may be observed in children, any one of which may fairly inspire us with the hope of success in the task of instruction, — a natural taste for certain studies ; an enlarged understanding, which delights in exercising itself on all subjects ; or, lastly, a determined resolution to succeed. Any one of these dispositions may, to a certain degree, supply the place of the others ; but when all three are wanting, it is only by a variety of experiments, and

a minute observation of individual character, that we can determine what plan to pursue.

If we take the faculty of reasoning in its strictest sense and most limited application, the consideration of it will not detain us long, for the course of education in this respect is well ascertained. It is generally allowed that the study of mathematics offers the most perfect example of a regular chain of reasoning. In this science, one introductory proposition becomes, by demonstration, a fact, from which every succeeding one is derived ; and yet the step from the known to the unknown is so gradually made, that the difficulty may be proportioned to all ages and all capacities ; and it has not inaptly been compared to the wrestler who continued carrying the same calf on his shoulders till it became an ox.

We often find very young children taking pleasure in arithmetic, because they like anything which is clear and certain, and leads to a plain result. And it has been shown that, by teaching them to calculate with rapidity and yet with the most perfect accuracy, their intellectual powers have been excited in a manner which has manifested itself in all their other studies. The extraordinary results which have thus been obtained, in Mr. Wood's school at Edinburgh, have been given to the public in an interesting



little work, entitled, "Account of the Edinburgh Sessional School, by J. Wood, Esq."

At a more advanced age, the calculating sciences are of great use in forming several valuable habits. They bestow upon the mind that strength and conciseness, that art of taking a summary view, which, by enabling it to draw from a chain of reasoning some final and unexpected consequence, leads the way to future discoveries. In fact, though the tendency of these studies be too exclusive to constitute them a foundation for all instruction, they afford an instrument, far too useful in sharpening the intellect to be neglected; and we can hardly do wrong in devoting to them a few minutes every day during the whole period of education. By a constant succession of short lessons, the attention is excited without being fatigued, and a salutary modification of the youthful mind is insensibly produced.

If we have taken pains to awaken our pupil's curiosity concerning the works of art and nature, he will himself often apply his reasoning powers to them. Having once entered on this path, innumerable objects will be presented to his observation. But he is not yet old enough for the natural and physical sciences to become objects of regular and serious study; and, should we make him encounter difficulties which he is not yet capable of overcoming, we might at once

extinguish any interest which has been excited. When no reason exists why the course of instruction should be confined within certain restricted limits as to time, it seems to me more desirable to omit scientific studies altogether (except that of calculation) than to run any risk either of disheartening our pupil, or of leading him to pursue them in a listless manner. He who has been long wandering in the purlieus of science seldom preserves energy enough to penetrate into its recesses.

On the other hand, the developement of that particular branch of reasoning which applies to the conduct of life, and is commonly denominated judgment, is most essential. Occasions for its exercise are continually occurring; and yet good sense is so rare a quality, and, even when it does exist, is so frequently the effect rather of a happy instinct than of an enlightened cultivation, that we can hardly exonerate education from all blame on this account.

That disposition, so natural to children, which impels them on every occasion to decide according to the feeling of the moment, to accept or reject as their wishes dictate, without allowing any time for deliberation, presents the first obstacle to the formation of the judgment. As their own reasoning is nothing more than an excuse for following their inclinations, they conclude ours to be the same. Hence it is that we

find them so little disposed to listen to our harangues: the only circumstance which interests them is the decision we are likely to make, and while we are talking they are endeavouring to anticipate what this decision will be. On this account it has sometimes been found desirable, in order to render them impartial judges, to debate the subject in question on neutral ground. By submitting to their judgment the actions of fictitious or historical characters — provided the case be a plain one, and any difficulties attending it be cleared away — a correct decision may often be obtained from them.

But, after all, such questions must be artificially prepared; and in real life affairs are much more complicated in their nature. If a choice is to be made amongst many different modes of action, it is only from the circumstances of his own life that a child can learn to exercise his judgment, and can procure the elements of a just decision. How then can he judge of the conduct of personages in distant ages, whose manners, feelings, and opinions, differ so completely from his own? And if we allow him to form conclusions upon uncertain and insufficient grounds, we are inducing a habit most injurious to every species of reasoning.

Let it be our endeavour, then, by the help of truth and impartiality, to give our child an ex-

ample of cool judgment in our own conduct. He will then learn to form his ideas of human affairs from what concerns himself personally. In all moral questions he will go directly to their source, and by examining his own motives discover his temptations and excuses: and, in such questions as relate to wisdom or prudence, he possesses also sufficient information to guide him in his decision; for he knows, at least in great measure, the circumstances of his family, and the tastes, fortune, and occupations of those to whom he must conform. When he sees that even in his own simple existence so many things have to be taken into consideration, he will understand how seldom we can judge correctly for others; and on all subjects he will acquire a habit, too little practised by people in general — that of challenging his own judgment.

Yet it is not so much in the habit of examining a thing on all sides that most men are deficient, as in the art of fixing their attention on the most conclusive point, — on that important consideration to which all secondary ideas of utility ought to give way. Both the relative importance of objects, and their particular urgency at the moment, are continually misunderstood. Any one can draw a correct inference from a single proposition, and many can see very far and very distinctly in a particular direction; but we rarely meet with those

who can immediately discern, in every affair, both what is really the essential point, and where the danger lies. This valuable quality should be sedulously cultivated in children, by taking care always to bring them back to the main subject when they lose themselves in minor considerations.

As correctness of judgment is formed, not by much reasoning, but by the certainty of our decisions, we only expose children to the risk of judging erroneously when we engage them to decide on such subjects as are still in debate even amongst men ; yet, from a wish to propagate our own opinions, we are constantly in the habit of committing this error. No doubt, it is only natural for a parent to wish that his children should agree with him on those subjects to which he attaches importance ; and the parental influence is so desirable, and at the same time so inevitable, that we must take it with all its accompaniments. But let us exercise it in all sincerity, and let us not pretend to an impartiality which must be continually contradicting itself. If, by way of bestowing more freedom on our children, we make a point of placing before them all the reasons for and against every system of opinions, we shall but entangle them in perplexities : a state of doubt is intolerable to them ; and we may easily conceive why it should be so. It is not the search

after truth which interests them, but the craving they feel for action; and, in order to insure this action for the future, they would at once decide on the part they shall take. After trying for a length of time to discover, from the expression of our countenance, what we think on the subject, they ask at last, "What then must we believe?" We might, therefore, as well have told them at first.

But a father, acting with perfect sincerity, should give his children a more correct idea both of their own capability, and of the condition of human affairs, and say to them; "Such is my belief, and such the line of conduct prescribed to me by feelings and reasonings which appear to me well founded, though you are not yet capable of appreciating their justice. I might, no doubt, easily convince you of their truth; but this would be taking advantage of your confidence in my judgment. Nor must you forget, that those parents who think differently from me on these points have also many arguments to bring forward to their children in favour of their own opinions."

A father, who is conscious of the purity of his intentions, has no reserves in his conversations with his children, they will therefore, in most cases, after such an explanation, adopt his opinions in the end, with such modifications as

naturally result from the progressive course of human affairs.

Above all, let it be our earnest endeavour to inspire our children with such elevated feelings as may effectually prevent their ever adopting any doubtful principles, or immoral systems; we may then safely trust the decision of all intricate questions to the effect of time and the advancing developement of their reason.

## CHAPTER VII.

PRACTICAL RULES CONTINUED. — CULTIVATION OF  
THE MEMORY.

THERE is, perhaps, no subject connected with education which has given rise to so much discussion as the faculty of memory ; nor, after all, has any thing been agreed upon either as to its nature, the desirableness of cultivating it, or the best means of doing so. We shall not here enter into any examination of the first of these points, but content ourselves with employing the word memory to denote the power of recalling to our mind former impressions ; and, without attempting to trace this power to its source, shall make use of the assistance of experience and observation, in order to ascertain how it may best be strengthened.

No sooner was the inefficacy of such teaching as depended entirely on the memory — mere learning by rote — fully recognized, than instructors fell into the other extreme, and the study of words was in every possible way superseded by that of things. Yet so closely are these two studies connected, that it would, perhaps, have been a wiser plan not to let the one



be completely given up for the other. Where this has been done, the pupil has of course been required to attend only to the sense of his lesson, without troubling himself about the terms in which it was expressed; and if, on being called upon to repeat it, he was found to understand its meaning, he was allowed to make use of any expressions he chose. But, as children are not very skilful in giving an abstract, these expressions would naturally be extremely vague and incorrect; and, even when we have flattered ourselves that they understood the subject, their knowledge of it, if not fixed in their minds by a determined form of words, will be confused, and soon lost again.

The truth is, that all instruction consists of two distinct things — understanding and knowledge. Hence in the study of every lesson two operations are required — the explanation, which, whether given by the master, or discovered by the pupil, should always be expressed in terms differing from those in the book; — and the recitation, which should be perfect and exact. Without the explanation, accompanied by such questions as are necessary to assure us that it has been understood, the mind might remain totally unconcerned in the lesson; and, without the recitation, we cannot be sure that the memory has received any impression.

Have those teachers, who would confine their

pupil's attention entirely to things, reflected sufficiently on the great power of words? Have they considered that real objects, — objects even present to our senses, — will often remain unknown to us, if their names be not brought to our recollection? Suppose, for instance, we accidentally meet a person whom we remember to have seen before, and whose appearance and voice are quite familiar to us; we see and hear him; yet all our ideas concerning him are confused and imperfect, — when suddenly his name recurs to us, presenting us with a key to unlock the storehouse of our memory, and we immediately recollect the time and place of our former meeting, with all its concomitant circumstances. By this singular and mysterious property of language, all the adjuncts of an object, though refusing to associate themselves with the object itself, are readily connected with its name; and thus by means of the symbol we obtain what we were unable to acquire from the thing itself.

We have only to attend to the discussions of any deliberative assembly, in order fully to comprehend the great importance of an accurate memory for words. How often is a noisy declaimer put to silence at once by a clear and correct exposition of names or dates! and how much injustice is frequently caused by the expressions of one speaker being inaccurately quoted by another! And yet, the habit of

paying a proper degree of attention to the words in which any subject is expressed is one which will never be contracted, if the pupil have been taught to consider only the meaning of phrases, without any regard to the language in which they are couched.

We must acknowledge that the memory finds a powerful auxiliary in the use of the reasoning powers — the art of referring effects to their appropriate causes. But from this very circumstance the memory itself becomes less exercised; for in proportion to the assistance it receives are its own efforts diminished. There can be no doubt that the only value which either knowledge depending on the reasoning powers, or studies of any kind, possess, is derived from the effect they produce on the developement of the intellect; but at present we are considering only the memory, and the best means of improving it as a distinct faculty. Not that I would, by any means, recommend a return to the old erroneous system of learning almost every thing by heart — an occupation equally wearisome and stupifying. What appears to me the essential thing is, that a little should be learnt accurately, and in a variety of subjects. The advantage of this will be felt, not only in the power it gives of retaining what has been acquired, but also in the greater ease with which new acquisitions are made.

I have said that I would recommend this plan to be pursued in a variety of subjects, because experience constantly proves how much individuals differ both in the nature and power of their memory. Some persons remember words, others facts, and others dates; some require a chain of logical reasoning in order to fix any thing in their minds; while to others, an association of the subject with certain physical or moral impressions is necessary: and hence we see the reason why we should endeavour to vary the exercises of this faculty in our instructions.

Those who have made the science of nomenclature their study have ascertained that the first hundred names of different objects are learnt with much difficulty, but that afterwards an indefinite number of new ones will be remembered with little trouble. This is also the case in the study of languages, in learning poetry, and most likely in every other exercise of the memory. An obstruction seems to exist at the entrance of each department of knowledge, but, when this is once removed, no further obstacle occurs.

The Germans, a deep-thinking people, and skilled in the art of analysing, have studied this subject thoroughly; and a judicious writer (Niémeyer), who has compared their various opinions, strongly recommends an assiduous and methodical cultivation of the memory, in each of

its several branches. Nor can we doubt the utility of this advice, as the full developement of any important faculty should always be the object of our earnest desire; but, at the same time, whilst following it, why should we not, in cultivating the memory, choose such means as possess secondary advantages; such as will not only exercise every variety of memory, but impart at the same time much useful knowledge. Thus, instead of making the pupil learn by heart a long list of strange unmeaning words, let him commit to memory a series of the names of sovereigns; and, instead of a succession of numbers taken at random, let him learn the dates of some well selected historical events. The memory itself gains by being exercised either on what interests the pupil, or on what he conceives to be useful, for he then endeavours to retain what he has acquired; and, by recalling his ideas to his mind, exercises that particular and very important branch of memory which constitutes recollection.

I shall not dwell long on what is termed the art of Mnemonics. As it is an artificial memory — an auxiliary — its tendency is to relieve the natural memory from some part of its labour. It is, no doubt, very desirable that ideas should be connected together in some way or other; and they are naturally, and very generally, so connected through associations similar to those

formed by the rules of mnemonics. But no means of this kind are so efficacious as those devised by the pupil himself. If any others be presented to him, we should at least take care that they produce no absurd ideas in his mind. Technical verses, for instance (of which Voltaire himself has given us an example), possess no other disadvantage than that of being composed in the most wretched verse: but I would entirely forbid all such ridiculous and incongruous images as have been formed by the decomposition of particular names. They would assuredly, by their absurdity alone, be deeply fixed in the memory: but this is the very thing to be dreaded; they haunt us for ever; and the simple and natural impression of certain ideas is so completely disfigured, that we can never restore the original likeness.

There are not so many objections to the use of what has been termed a *local memory*, in order to give permanency to our recollections. Its true function is to present to the memory, at pleasure, the images of visible objects; and it may in this way become very useful, by furnishing children with a mode of representation which enables them to embrace in one point of view many objects at once, and to make them, whilst thus united, the subject of internal contemplation. Hence they will acquire a habit of forming for themselves pictures or plans of

the same kind for the arrangement of their ideas.

Education possesses various methods of strengthening this power of simultaneous representation, by means of exercises, useful not only for this purpose, but in other respects also. The study of geography on globes, or with maps, or, what is better than either, on a plot of garden ground, is well calculated to promote this object; and the formation of contemporary historical tables constitutes another very useful exercise; but, above all, let the pupil be accustomed to perform mental exercises of this kind. Let him trace from memory plans in which the relative situations of the rooms in a house are laid down, or sketch an elevation of a complicated group of buildings, or mark out the intricacies of some particular streets: he will thus be obliged to form exact ideas in his mind of what is presented to his eyes; and will learn to see things in his imagination, as well as in nature. And the more we make these various employments productive of pleasure, the more durable will be the impression they leave.

In fact, if we set aside the question of strengthening the memory as a faculty, and simply endeavour to find out the best means of rendering the recollection of what has been learnt permanent, we shall find no influence so powerful as that of pleasure. Nothing tends so much to

perpetuate the knowledge which has been acquired as the exercise of the natural tastes, and the activity which is excited by the idea of anticipated pleasures. But this is not the case with other motives. Self-love, and even other more disinterested feelings, may spur us on to the acquisition of science, but will not assist us in preserving what we have gained. Even when the imagination has been engrossed by the prospect of some object totally unconnected with the study by which it is to be gained, it is the pleasure of having succeeded in accomplishing this object that leaves a durable impression on the memory, not the means by which it has been effected. Hence a child will often remember all his life the eulogium he has received, or the prize he has obtained, whilst the subject of that study which procured him these rewards will be entirely forgotten. And hence, also, it so frequently happens, that the knowledge obtained in those severe studies, which are pursued with such ardour preparatory to an examination, is afterwards entirely effaced from the memory.

As we cannot, however, by any system of education, obtain the power of exciting at our pleasure the interest of children, frequent repetitions form the easiest method of strengthening the memory. The time devoted to this employment is seldom wasted, and may, by methodical arrangement, be much abridged. And in this



case, where it is particularly important to secure to the pupil the possession of the most valuable kind of knowledge, we perceive the great advantage of those studies of which the object has been the cultivation of his reasoning powers. It is by the power of ascending to general principles that he is enabled to gain possession of the chain which connects ideas together; and facts which have been once properly classed are easily referred to at any future time. But we must remember that there is a chain to be seized and retained; if we let it slip, every thing goes with it.

The first notions of science which children acquire are easily lost, because there is nothing as yet in their minds to which they can be linked; what they do retain is owing only to some odd association of sounds, or other accidental circumstances. So that, unless such recollections are favoured by some lucky chance, we frequently see prodigies of memory succeeded by prodigies of forgetfulness.

A little girl of about seven or eight years old appeared to have a very extraordinary knowledge of geography. Amongst many hundred slips of paper, on each of which was written the name of some town or province, with its degrees of latitude and longitude, if any one were taken up, and the name of the town read to her, she would immediately mention the

figures denoting the latitude and longitude ; or, if the numbers were told her, she would name the town. But as people were soon tired of witnessing the never-failing success of this trick of memory, and neglected to ask for a display of it, in less than a year no traces remained of this apparently wonderful knowledge.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## REASONS WHY THE CULTIVATION OF THE IMAGINATION SHOULD NOT BE NEGLECTED DURING CHILDHOOD.

IN cultivating the faculties which have hitherto been the subject of our consideration, we have no fear as to their future effect; every employment which tends to strengthen the attention, the reason, and the memory, and which is at the same time innocent in itself, must be favourable to our views, and may with perfect safety be encouraged. But when we come to deal with the imagination, much greater delicacy of management is required, and much more danger incurred. Though very far from desiring to destroy, we cannot deny that it is very often necessary rather to restrain and regulate, than to encourage this faculty.

It would seem as if, on account of the difficulties attending it, the consideration of this subject had been generally avoided. The superiority which a quick and lively imagination bestows, not only with respect to the power of pleasing, but as regards other and more solid advantages, is so evident, that we

can never bring ourselves to renounce it for our children, and yet, on the other hand, we cannot divest ourselves of all fear as to its effects; we cannot lose all dread of the fantastic visions, the enthusiasm, and at times almost subversion of reason, which it produces in the youthful breast.

What, then, is to be done? What method to be adopted? To do nothing at all is certainly the easiest, but not the wisest, plan. For let us endeavour to consider the subject dispassionately, divested alike of its terrors and its charms. In the earliest period of its development, it is not always easy to distinguish the imagination from that power of recalling absent objects which may be termed pictorial memory. But this difficulty cannot last long. The distinction between these two faculties is soon recognized, when we observe that the imagination is able to vary at its pleasure the pictures which it produces, and so to combine the elements of what has already existed, as to present to the mind things which have never yet been brought into existence; by thus connecting itself with the future it becomes the source of hope. What would be our moral condition if the imagination were suppressed? Incapable of foreseeing either the pleasure of executing our plans, or the good likely to result from their success, we should remain idly stationary; having no motive for

exertion, our energies would be completely deadened.

Happily, however, no one is ever found so entirely devoid of imagination as this supposition implies; yet how often do we behold it languid and feeble! Hence arise indolence, listlessness, a want of interest in life: those who are under the influence of this malady have no future, and their present existence is a burden to them. They view every new suggestion with aversion, because they cannot realize to themselves beforehand the probable effect of the proposed change. However dull or even painful their condition may be, they will endure it, rather than agree to any plan for relieving them from it. People thus wanting in imagination are not always deficient in feeling; it is the power of associating ideas with their feelings that is feeble. We often consider them selfish, when they are not really so, but are only incapable of placing themselves in the situation of others. Let an impression be once made upon them, and we find them equal to a certain amount of self-sacrifice.

Children who are devoid of imagination are not necessarily less good, but they certainly are much less agreeable, than others. They possess the egotism natural to their age, without either its grace or gaiety; and the task of instruction, at all times difficult, becomes in their case almost

insurmountable. Even when their minds, though incapable of nobler interests, are open to physical pleasures, so little power have they of looking forward, that these cannot be held out to them as rewards; and if by chance they do conceive any desire, the whole force of their will is concentrated on that one point: they cannot be made to comprehend any suggested substitute.

From these indisputable facts we may learn that the imagination, far from being only, as sometimes designated, the *fool of the family*, performs a most important part in our intellectual developement; and as we cannot drive it from home, but are compelled to live with it, we should endeavour to treat it in the most judicious manner. Without wasting our time at present in inquiring whether an excess or deficiency of this faculty be more injurious, let us enter at once on the important part of the subject, and consider how it may be influenced by education.

In the first instance, we can have no difficulty in perceiving that this influence must in general tend to prevent its running into extravagance. Mankind, when in a savage state, are completely governed by their imagination; but the fatal effects of its tyranny diminish as civilization advances. It is universally acknowledged, that the less any people are educated the more are

they under the dominion of superstition, absurd expectations, and delusions. Wonders, which formerly appeared to the ignorant nothing less than miracles, have, by the progress of reason and the increase of knowledge, been accounted for on natural principles; and in proportion as the real world, with all its magnificent arrangements, has been unveiled, a world of chance and fantasy has vanished.

But though the power of superstition over the imagination has been thus overthrown, are there not other kinds of imagination which are equally to be dreaded? Has moral education made as much progress in this respect as intellectual? Are we sufficiently careful to accustom children to bring every dangerous or criminal thought into subjection to their will? For we must repeat what has been already stated, that the imagination is not altogether independent of the will. In one sense it may indeed be said to be so; it does not require the assent of the will to bring it into action: it displays its pictures, invents, creates, follows out its designs, not only without our assistance, but with all the more freedom from our non-interference; still, however, we have the power of interfering, and the course of its fanciful representations may be arrested by the authority of reason. It is therefore the part of education both to endeavour to give the pupil such strength of cha-

racter as may enable him to confine his imagination within certain bounds, and to furnish him with so many subjects of interest, that he may easily be able at any time to give it a new direction. The innocent exercise of the imagination is as necessary as its due restraint; and perhaps it is only when exercising it that we have also the power of regulating it.

Restraint and encouragement are then both necessary; but their respective importance must vary in the different branches of education. Let us endeavour to ascertain what are the circumstances which render it necessary to curb the imagination, and also when we may be justified in allowing it a greater degree of freedom.

In the first place, in every thing relating to heavenly things, beyond what has been expressly revealed, its flight should be restrained as much as possible. We cannot indeed entirely exclude the imagination from a subject so intimately connected with our hopes; but when we are addressing children, whose hearts are as warm as their minds are free from prejudice, the most direct and certain road is that of plain truth and feeling. The simple and sublime objects presented by the Scriptures furnish the imagination with sufficient excitement; and the devout respect which they inspire, the humble fear of mixing human conceptions with



divine revelations, will repress a too eager curiosity.

Again, education should endeavour to restrain the imagination on all subjects connected with the tender affections. How much a romantic and melancholy disposition tends to aggravate the sorrows of the heart is continually proved by the examples we behold of this effect amongst females, especially those of the higher classes. In the vacuity of their lives it forms a real misery. Their imagination, fixed on one object, either of fear or regret, envenoms the wounds of the heart; and, by leading them to take a sort of pride in their suffering, causes feelings in themselves far removed from egotism to approach very nearly to selfishness.

The evils to which this sort of unrestrained imagination gives rise are so much to be dreaded, that they cannot with any propriety be passed over in treating on the subject of education. They have, indeed, been so frequently pointed out, that, if young people be still exposed to them, it is not for want of sufficient warnings. But there are other errors of an equally fatal tendency, still more dangerous rocks which are met with in an opposite direction, and which have been almost entirely overlooked. And yet, perhaps, as regards the regulation of the imagination, there is nothing more injurious than that dry abstract system of edu-

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cation sometimes denominated prudent. The idea that it is possible for the imagination to die of inanition is both absurd and dangerous. Deprived of one sort of food it seeks another; and it can never fail to find a supply of some kind or other.

We often deceive ourselves by the sort of scenic view we take of the imagination. In exalted feelings, and in the fantastic ideas with which the mind is engrossed, we at once recognize the effect of its fairy-like power. But when, totally devoid of enthusiasm, it spends its energy on the more gross and vulgar interests of life, such as are appreciated only by our physical nature, we no longer bestow on it its proper appellation. And yet it is under these circumstances that it is really most to be dreaded. Once associated with the selfish feelings, the task of displacing it becomes the more difficult from its being employed on realities, and not merely on chimeras of its own creation. And, while life affords so many sad realities, it can never be at a loss for the means of exercising its power of turning every thing into a cause of fanciful apprehension. Old age is always seen in the distance; illness constantly impending; and death ready at any moment to seize on his victim. To such an imagination, poverty — always a possible evil — appears immediate and certain; and the smallest sacrifice

in favour of another dangerous. Presenting always the dark side of any doubtful event to the mind, and thus causing it to live under the reflected influence of a gloomy futurity, the imagination, if allowed to feed on itself, instead of being led by a judicious education to exercise its powers on external objects, destroys every consolatory feeling, and too often fosters the most deplorable passions.

What then is to be done in order to prevent this faculty from bringing in array against us its inauspicious visions, not only in the region of chimeras, but in that of realities also? We shall often find that very little indeed is necessary, and that a mere trifle will be sufficient to dispel its most formidable delusions. We must take advantage of the season of infancy, while the child is still an infant in his amusements, to procure for him the most simple playthings. Let him have flowers, birds, pencils, any thing which will enable him to discover, to create, to invent. The imagination, as we have seen, cannot be destroyed, but it may be charmed; it may be soothed by sweet tones, or amused by bright colours. It is an Argus, to be lulled to sleep by the sounds of a flute; a Cerberus, to be appeased by a cake.

And here we perceive the unspeakable importance of an intellectual education. Instruction, like industry, possesses the power of con-

ferring a degree of value on objects which, without it, would seem destined to remain useless. And, as it is the tendency of the imagination to exaggerate the importance of any object with which it is occupied, it is desirable that its magnifying powers should be exercised on the small interests of life, rather than on the greater.

In proportion, therefore, to the real value of any object, is the risk greater that the imagination may, by associating itself with it, loosen the obligations of religion and conscience. Let every thing which constitutes a principle of conduct, or a motive to action—every thing which in a temperament at once feeble and excitable might assume the character of passion—be carefully protected from its capricious influence. But since it follows, from the foregoing observations, that the imagination must not be allowed to exercise itself on subjects so sacred and so deeply interesting as religion—from which alone we hope for eternal happiness,—or the tender affections—which form our only comfort in this world,—how happy it is for us that we are able to furnish this dangerous faculty not only with innocent occupation, but with such a variety of objects as will obviate the hazard which might be incurred by its dwelling on one only, of a tendency to monomania! When it has once spread its brilliant

network over the whole face of nature, it finds in every direction meshes to which it can attach itself; and are we not justified in concluding that what appears at first view only the luxury of nature, — that profusion of beauty so eagerly seized on by what are usually termed the useless arts, — is really designed to afford salutary employment to the imagination which has, by some people, been regarded as merely another luxury of nature?

Let us beware, then, of that mistaken wisdom, or that ill-directed austerity, which would lead us to neglect the benefits of God. By the cultivation of agreeable tastes and interesting pursuits, let us teach our children to lay up resources against a time of trouble. Let us provide some means of diverting the imagination of those tender-hearted beings, whose acute feelings render them too keenly susceptible, from dwelling on painful subjects; and to those who are apt to be too deeply impressed by the sad conditions on which human life is held, let us present such pleasing and varied modes of instruction as may lead them to exercise their imagination on external objects, and prevent them from shutting themselves up in a wretched and reprehensible selfishness.

CHAPTER IX.

MEANS OF CULTIVATING THE IMAGINATION.—  
BOOKS FOR YOUNG CHILDREN.

It is not by the assistance of books that we are enabled to cultivate the imagination of children in the first instance; they may be employed in order to awaken impressions already received, or to revive and develope feelings already experienced, but they do not impart to the soul any thing which is quite new to it, and their influence is more closely connected with the past than we are apt to imagine. The diversified scenes of life, the agreeable or painful sensations which arise from their amusements, or from the prosecution of their various plans, form the source whence the imagination of children is furnished with materials on which to employ itself, and with energy to bring these materials into action. Both these points are deserving of attention. It is necessary to provide the young imagination — eager for supply and yet deficient in resources — with objects on which it may be exercised; but, unless these objects be calculated to give the necessary

excitement, they will add nothing to its inventive powers.

The culture of the imagination must therefore really begin long before the time for literary education; and it is perhaps from the amusements of children, which we are not accustomed to consider as of much importance, that the principal means of cultivating it are derived. There are, however, many dangers against which we should be prepared, or we may fall into various errors on this subject: by neglecting the culture of the imagination we may suffer it to remain cold and inactive; or by our too great eagerness to excite it we may paralyse its powers. If the succession even of the most agreeable objects be too rapid, or too long continued, the sensations they produce efface each other, and nothing but a confusion of feelings remains. Whenever we observe that our children are grave and silent, after we have procured for them some unaccustomed recreation, we may be sure that the amusement has either lasted too long, or has been too exciting for their moral constitution.

Instead, therefore, of cultivating the imagination, we have wearied it, and exhausted its strength for the time to come; and the impressions produced by any similar objects will, for a length of time, be much less vivid. But when children talk eagerly of what they have

seen, and take an evident pleasure in describing it, we may be pretty sure that, as far at least as their intellectual progress is concerned, their natural faculties are uninjured.

There are impressions, however, of a more tranquil nature, the effects of which may be very desirable, though not such as evince themselves by any outward signs. In the country, for instance, children live under the constant influence of the undefinable charm which it throws around them, and often enjoy pleasures of which they are hardly themselves aware. The pupil, who is most resolute in his determination not to allow any thing to divert his attention from his studies, will receive with delight a proposal to go and learn his lesson beneath a shady tree. Why is it that every occupation in the open air is so pleasing to children? Is it not because a soothing emotion is thus excited in the soul, and innumerable scattered sensations — the effects of which will, at some future time, be combined and arranged by the fine arts — exercise, even now, a secret and magical influence upon them? The spirit of poetry lives already in their souls, and the first vocabulary of the language of imagination is of nature's teaching.

No doubt these various impressions are raised to their true value by literary cultivation; and we shall, therefore, devote some time to the



examination of such books as are written for children ; but their number has of late years increased so rapidly, that this very circumstance will prevent our entering at length on the subject.

Leaving out of the question all such elementary works as are intended to lay the foundation of more solid instruction, I must confess that the utility of this abundant supply of light reading appears to me to depend very much on the interest awakened ; that is to say, on the impulse given by such books to the feelings and the imagination. Here, again, we have to avoid the danger of exciting either of these faculties too powerfully. But having, in the first place, carefully laid aside every work which might expose them to this risk, we shall always find that a certain degree of pleasure is necessary, in order that children may not only be led occasionally to prefer reading to more active occupation, but that they may profit by what they read.

It may, however, be asked, whether it is possible that they should derive any advantage from this kind of reading ? Certainly they may ; at least under ten years of age. It would be unjust to deny, that these works have the merit of presenting to children a happy choice of language, and thus contributing to the formation of their style ; that they reconcile them to

solitude, and give them both the habit and the desire of intellectual occupation. At the same time, it appears to me that, as far as instruction is concerned, these books possess little or no value.

I have already given my opinion against that charlatanry which professes to communicate instruction through the medium of amusement and I would now add, that no plan can be less calculated for inspiring children with a love for science. The influence of the imagination is indeed still powerful at this age ; but, having become more accustomed to the natural course of events, their eager hope of novelty is diminished. At an earlier age nothing astonished them : every thing was so extraordinary that nothing appeared particularly wonderful. But at ten years old they have a vague idea that they shall find something of the marvellous in science, which seems to them full of a mysterious sublimity. If displayed to them, however, in a familiar form, and brought down to the level of their understanding, they lose all relish for it, and feel no interest in truths which they believe to have been accommodated to their capacity. They would have them openly and seriously presented to them, with the liberty of rejecting for the present such as are above their comprehension ; and, by the adoption of

this plan, we also avoid the danger of diminishing their respect for truth itself.

There are, however, various pleasing and easy studies for which a taste may be encouraged by means of these little books. Such are, for example, geography, which is rendered attractive to them by the narratives of travels; and natural history, which, as long as it relates to the description and habits of animals, affords them great pleasure; but the study of inorganic nature has no charms for the imagination. It is only by means of verbal explanations, or by seeing the things themselves, that the attention of children can be fixed on inanimate objects. In this case, therefore, where it becomes necessary to talk, to explain, and describe, the principal end of these books — the employment which they afford for solitude — is lost. They may, indeed, still be useful to mothers as a valuable resource in the hours they devote to their children; but they are then to be considered in a totally different point of view.\*

\* It may seem premature to speak here of books belonging rather to a more advanced age; yet I cannot deny myself the pleasure of mentioning Mrs. Marcet's excellent conversational works on scientific subjects; so clear and interesting, that they are calculated to give mothers and children an opportunity of studying together what, perhaps, could not so well be pursued in any other manner.

From many of these works, indeed, children might derive much useful assistance, were they really desirous of instruction; but this is not often the case; and it is on this account that the same mode of teaching which answers for men does not succeed with children. Men, having generally a decided intention of learning, have only to conquer the inaptness of unexercised intellect, and for this purpose they voluntarily exert themselves; which children, especially those of the higher classes, seldom do. They are convinced that they shall always be furnished with a sufficient supply of lessons, and every attempt which is made to cheat them into more during their play-hours only serves to strengthen this conviction.

In such cases, however, as do not exact any very severe degree of attention, even an idle child may be induced, by means of persuasion, to take in a certain quantity of common-place instruction. But what is gained by this? If, indeed, we speak of obligatory teaching, I have nothing to say against it; it becomes a lesson, and its interest then consists in the idea of duty connected with its performance. Perhaps the pupil may be required to give an account, or make an abstract, of what he has been reading; and he has then a motive for exercising his understanding and his memory. But to hold out as an amusement what is none to him is an

erroneous system, and leads to the rejection of instruction which, under another form, might have been willingly received. At this age, the developement of the intellect is only retarded by that reading which is neither productive of pleasure, nor undertaken from conscientious motives.

Nor can any reading be continued for a length of time without being attended with disadvantage, and the more uninteresting the book, the greater the disadvantage becomes. If a lively impression have been made by it on the child, his understanding will not have been entirely idle; but if he have been listlessly turning over the leaves — if a rapid succession of words and indistinct images have merely floated before him — his faculties will only have been enfeebled by the occupation. Neither his judgment nor his memory will have been exercised; his energy will have been deadened rather than excited, and he would have been much more profitably employed in spinning his top.

On this subject experience teaches us that, in children of an indolent disposition, this tendency to a mere passive state of existence is increased by too much reading; while those of a more energetic temperament can digest a much more abundant supply of intellectual food. It is an ascertained fact, that those men who have been endowed with the finest imagination have almost

always been great devourers of books in childhood. We can then lay down no general law for the regulation of our conduct in this branch of education : with regard to the effects of imagination there is in each individual an idiosyncrasy which requires the most vigilant observation.

As all influence depends on the degree of interest excited, the various representations of life which are offered to children in books produce the most distinct effect on their characters. Owing to the vivacity of their imagination, the pictures presented to their minds have a vividness and reality which they do not possess in our eyes. We need only refer to the beautiful parables in the New Testament, to be convinced that even those precepts of morality which, if presented in the dry form of admonition, would leave no trace on the mind, are capable of making a deep impression when clothed in the garb of fiction. It must at the same time be owned, that these parables possess the additional advantage of being short; that the moral they inculcate is perfectly clear; and that the design they have in view is accomplished all the better for being distinctly avowed. How cold and constrained do our moral allegories appear, when compared with these simple and perfect models ! Yet the feelings of children are also frequently excited by more diffuse narratives, which may be made

the medium of the noblest sentiments, and will often touch a corresponding chord in the youthful breast. Amongst the numerous religious stories, which have latterly been published, no doubt there are many the tendency of which must be to produce good ; though here, as every where else, a judicious selection is very necessary. Any thing which might lead to a high-wrought state of feeling, or to superstition, must be carefully avoided ; and it is almost always desirable to soften the colouring of the pictures which are presented to children in these books. But what can be so consolatory and soothing as the effects of true piety ? From the relation of real events, we may learn how much comfort and support the poor frequently derive in this world, from their confidence in God and their Christian anticipation of happiness in another life. In such narratives, no present recompense, no worldly reward, is held out as an incentive to virtue ; but the peace of mind arising from devotion to the will of God is painted in such glowing colours, that children, learning to appreciate the value of pure and spiritual joys, feel no desire for any other.

I do not wish, however, to confine my praises entirely to these little works ; there are many others, not perhaps imbued with exactly the same spirit, yet innocent, and even useful in their tendency. The intellectual horizon of

children is so bounded that they seldom observe anything beyond the immediate object presented to them; and, provided nothing be offered but what is good, the omission of what would be still better is not injurious. They derive, therefore, not pleasure alone, but much intellectual advantage from such delightful stories as those of Miss Edgeworth, Madame Guizot, and many other writers. These pleasing fictions may, by imparting a knowledge of society and the laws by which it is regulated, in some degree supply the place of experience. But after all, and when every possible exception has been made in favour of such as are really deserving of praise, we must not expect too much from the happy influence of such writing.

In the first place, we must not hope for any beneficial effect from the maxims of morality which may be introduced in the course of the narrative. In stories of any length the child's attention is entirely absorbed by the dramatic interest they excite. Carried on by this interest, any reflections which may be introduced are passed over, and considered only as so many interruptions to the relation of events. But, on the other hand, mothers are especially delighted with these very reflections: "What a beautiful sentiment!" they exclaim: "What an excellent rule of conduct! Oh! if I could only have had such advice when I was a child, how



glad I should have been!" But as children they would have cared for it as little as their own children do now.

More effect is, however, produced by the general tendency of the whole story; though it may not always be very easy to ascertain the precise nature of its influence. The child is sure to identify himself with the noble and generous character who is the hero of the narrative, taking a personal interest in all his troubles and joys, without stopping to consider how far he may or may not have deserved them. He sympathizes in his feelings and passions, longs to avenge his injuries, and excuses his anger by passing it off as justice. But if, unluckily, the parts are changed, if the hero be lively, clever, popular, and yet at the same time morally worthless, the conscience of the poor child is sadly perplexed. In many stories written with the very best intentions, it is not always the good children who excite the greatest interest; they are too often made tiresome and pedantic; the more daring and thoughtless are generally much greater favourites with the young readers, who are also very apt to consider the fine discourses, so often put into the mouths of the parents, as only tedious and foolish.

We would strongly advise mothers to reject all such books as afford a representation of particular vicious inclinations, from which their

children are happily exempt. The infectious nature of these vices is not destroyed by the reproach which may be attached to them. The seeds of vanity and envy may by this means be developed in minds which were previously uncontaminated by these feelings. Even in the region of imagination the baneful effects of example are experienced, and the most durable impression is often found to be that which is in direct opposition to the one intended by the writer. But what appears to me the least desirable part of these stories is, not unfrequently, that which the author has wished to place in the strongest light, and on which, consequently, he has bestowed the greatest pains. I allude to the use so commonly made of personal interest as a motive to action, and as a praiseworthy object. A false system of morality is thus founded on an equally false representation of the course of human events; and, in order to prove the advantage of virtue, stories are invented in which all who are good are prosperous. Would you then prefer, it may be asked, an opposite plan? Would you desire that virtue should be frequently made unhappy; that it should appear to bring misfortune in its train, almost as a matter of course? Far from it;—this, in fact, would be an equal departure from truth. We cannot fail to be convinced, from impartial observation, that, in addition to

the common troubles incident to humanity, there are some peculiarly reserved for the guilty; that, besides the secret pangs inflicted by conscience, there are evils to which the wicked are much more exposed than the good. If, then, writers would content themselves with representing vice as always unhappy, I should be satisfied. The natural instinct of mankind in general, as well as of children, insists so loudly on some expiation being made for crime, that it is almost necessary for every fiction to conclude with a catastrophe involving the guilty in misery.

But what I object to, as being not only untrue, but injurious in its effects, is, the representing virtue as constantly rewarded. For when the child grows up, and begins to observe what is really the case in the world, he will, no doubt, remark that the good are seldom exposed either to ignominy or to the punishment of the law; but he will find that they are not exempted from reverses, mortifications, and disappointments, and that the part they perform in life is not always a flattering one, nor sure to meet with applause. Why, then, should we abuse the credulity of children by dazzling them with seducing prospects? promising them something beautiful, which may please their vanity, as a reward for their good conduct; or leading them to expect that it will procure for them hereafter

riches, or a splendid establishment? Human life will not perform the promises thus made in its name, nor reward ill-founded attempts with success. Rather let us speak to our children in the name of Religion, and with her sincerity say to them, "My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you." Here both the reward and the reservation are equally true.

This fault, however, is, in a greater or less degree, so common in almost all fictions, that the use of them cannot, on that account alone, be forbidden; and the less so, as a remedy is easily provided. If a mother will consent to give up the supposed moral effect of the story, and take the trouble to expose to her children the various little stratagems by which it is intended to cheat them into goodness, they will view the employment of such means with indignation, and will feel how much the charms of virtue are diminished when it becomes self-interested. And by judiciously pointing out how far the world, as it is now constituted, is favourable to morality, and adding to the force of these indications by examples taken from real life, the judgment of children will be much better exercised than by any fictitious narratives.

But though the disadvantage arising from the erroneous tendency of a work, not faulty

in other respects, may be thus obviated, we can have no hesitation in rejecting at once all such as are devoid of merit both in matter and manner. And let us not be too easily pleased on this point ; too easily reconciled to trifling and uninteresting stories, and, above all, to any thing like affectation. How full of false sentiment, and of the pretension of authorship, are most of these little books ! Why are children to be so continually entertained with an account of their own charms, their rosy cheeks and curling hair ? Surely it is not desirable for them to have such flattering pictures of themselves presented to their notice ; and the display that is made of their artless vivacity, or their touching sensibility, can only tend to destroy that perfect simplicity which forms their true charm ; and by leading them to assume an air of cleverness and to exhibit emotions which they do not feel, must produce affectation and vanity.

I must own, even at the risk of being accused of frivolity, that the old-fashioned fairy tales appear to me far more desirable for children than such stories as these. They are much more amusing, and certainly less injurious. No doubt they are often absurd enough ; but this, being always acknowledged, is of little consequence. The influence they might have on the mind is at once destroyed by their

impossibility ; under the name of nonsense almost any thing may be passed over without danger, but we cannot too carefully guard against false reasoning of every kind.

Interest must be awakened in some way or other ; and, if the imagination be not excited, the only resource which remains is to touch some chord by which the passions may be moved. But romantic ideas, or such as are flattering to the vanity, are much more to be dreaded than those which are merely absurd ; and the surprise and amusement produced by the marvellous are far preferable to that love of success, that desire of eclipsing others, in short, to almost all the feelings which are excited by stories of which the incidents are within the bounds of possibility. These narratives, addressing themselves to the passions of childhood, make an impression on that age similar to what is produced at a later period by romances. And what advantage do we gain by exchanging what is impossible for what is improbable ? Is there not even more harm in giving a false idea of real life, than in transporting the mind for a time into the regions of fancy ?

Any thing, indeed, which might either inspire children with fear, or corrupt the purity of their minds, must of course be carefully avoided. But how many tales are there, which were the

delight of our childhood, and which are perfectly free from any such tendency! Do not let us debar our children from these innocent pleasures, which will prevent their attention from being entirely engrossed by matters of fact, will produce a poetical effect on their young minds, and enable them to soar for a time on the wings of imagination into brighter regions. No doubt this kind of reading should only be allowed occasionally; but is there any thing which does not require to be used with moderation? Why are parents so frightened at the idea of Tom Thumb, or Cinderella? Perhaps they are afraid of a comparison being made between these tales and true history, disadvantageous to the latter. But when the system of education is perfectly open, and instruction and amusement are each represented in their true character, they will never come in competition. If history be taught in a judicious manner, it will excite extreme interest in the minds of children: every thing that is known to be true has great power over their imagination, and they do not voluntarily trouble themselves about such parts as are dry or uninteresting. It is bad economy to deprive them of a real pleasure for the sake of one which they are not yet capable of appreciating.

But this is not, in fact, the true reason of that prohibition of every thing supernatural of

which we are speaking. We recognize in it the remains of an old system, whose efforts were directed towards a more serious object. Under the pretext of warring against superstition, the wits of the last century endeavoured to create an aversion for every thing out of the common course of events. The spirit of this school displayed itself on all subjects connected with education; fictions were required to deal only with what was probable, prose was preferred to poetry, and a kind of systematic enthusiasm was always affected in speaking of philanthropy and the natural affections.

Other systems succeeded to this; and the different tendencies of society discovered themselves even in the books written for children. But they have almost all been wanting in the one thing needful; for though their authors have, with an apparent severity, imposed upon themselves as an indispensable condition, the moral tendency of their stories, they have attended less to motives than to actions, and have interested themselves more about the understanding than the heart. Yet if, in idle playfulness, we place a bandage over the eyes of reason, it is but a game at blind-man's-buff, and can produce no evil consequence: but by giving false notions of morality, by flattering the vanity, prematurely awakening the passions, and fostering a childish pedantry, we are doing real



injury to our children. Let us not nourish the vicious inclinations of the man with such food as flatters the taste of the child; nor render still more energetic that tendency of the age which it is already so difficult to resist.

## BOOK V.

PERIOD BETWEEN TEN AND FOURTEEN, CONSIDERED  
WITH REFERENCE TO BOYS.

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## CHAPTER I.

CHARACTER OF BOYS.—REASONS FOR NOT SEND-  
ING THEM FROM HOME BEFORE THE AGE OF  
TEN OR TWELVE.

IN that consideration of the developement of the faculties, with which we have hitherto been occupied, general views only have been required; but a more minute observation of these faculties now becomes necessary. At the commencement of a new period, the changes which have been produced by time and education ought to be verified. In entering on this examination, however, I feel that some distinction must now be made between the education of boys and that of girls. This has not before been necessary, because, with very few exceptions, the same cares have been required for both. The same instinct which teaches a watch-

ful mother how to manage dispositions differing widely from each other, will also guide her conduct towards her sons and daughters. For the first few years of life, the character of infancy predominates over every other, and children—differing much less from each other than they do from us—are all considered as beings of one class. It must, however, be remembered that this is the case only for the first six or seven years; after that time, strongly marked distinctions begin to show themselves.

But as I propose to consider in a future part of this work the peculiar treatment required by the constitution and destiny of women, I have not hitherto experienced any disadvantage in confining myself to such remarks as would apply to the education of both sexes; and, in fact, a sufficiently extensive field was thus opened. For the principles and the end of all moral cultivation—devotional feelings, the ennobling ideas of a Creator and a Redeemer, and the sublime precepts of the Gospel,—must be the same for all immortal beings. And the knowledge which is requisite, in order to fulfil the duties of social life, must be also the same for minds which for some time appear equal in capacity. Even when advising that young children should be prepared for future admission to studies of a higher nature, and especially should have their attention drawn to the order of the physical world, this

plan would be equally favourable to the intellectual developement of women. Besides we must never forget that girls are to become mothers, that as mothers they will have to conduct the early education of their sons, and therefore that every thing which will then be required as part of their sons' education should now form a part of their own.

And, if the advice of M. Guizot, to which I venture to add my own, should ever be followed, and parents should decide on prolonging as much as possible the domestic education of their sons, it will become necessary for the minds of women to receive a still more enlarged cultivation. The distinctions, then, which we feel ourselves called upon to make in the first instance, do not refer so much to the acquirement of knowledge, as to practical morality, or the application of the general rules of duty to daily conduct.

Yet, as these distinctions are very important, and seem pointed out by nature herself, — for by an attentive observation we discover, even in infancy, a difference of character and disposition between boys and girls, — it follows, of course, that their education cannot, for any length of time, be carried on exactly on the same plan. At first sight, indeed, every thing appears alike amongst brothers and sisters; but under these

apparent resemblances lurk innumerable differences.

As we must, therefore, henceforth consider the two educations separately, I shall, for the future, devote myself principally to that of girls\*; at the same time offering a few remarks on the principle which, in my opinion, ought to influence that of boys before they pass the boundary of childhood. But there I must stop: any attempt to arrange the chaos of confusion which arises from the mixture of the elements of childhood and youth would be far beyond my powers. A similar period, indeed, occurs in the life of women, but marked by characteristics of a more simple and gentle nature.

My own task, during the period which I am now about to consider — the close of childhood in boys — appears less arduous, though that of education is, if possible, more important than ever. This interval does not, in fact, present anything very new to our observation; the same faculties display themselves, in a state, it is true, of greater advancement, and the aspect of life is in some degree changed; but the child, though

\* Madame Necker de Saussure has redeemed her pledge on this subject by the publication of a third volume of her work, entirely devoted to the consideration of female education and character, a translation of which is intended to follow the publication of these volumes.— *Note by Translator.*

grown, strengthened, and more enlightened, is still a child—still in a state of dependence, and still subject to the same desires. Let us consider him individually, and observe how the peculiarities of his character betray themselves.

That natural gracefulness, that touching sympathy, that tender, and at times, supplicating expression, which form the charm of infancy, and exercise so powerful an influence over us, are, perhaps, less remarkable at a very early age in boys than in girls. There is less consistency in their existence: in girls, the present and the future harmonize together; they always show a degree of feeling, are always aware of their own weakness, and always seek for protection. On the contrary, in boys, we are pleased by the contrast which we remark in their feelings; there seems a struggle between the child and the man; and, in spite of their continual need of assistance, they display a presentiment of future strength, occasional bursts of pride, and an innate desire of independence, which mark their originality of character. They have less penetration than girls, because they possess less of that sympathy which enters at once into the feelings of others; but they are not restrained by the fear of appearing ridiculous, and are, therefore, more completely natural. Perhaps we are inclined to place a higher value on their caresses

from our belief that they spring, not from a desire to please us, but from pure affection ; and hence any outward demonstration of their attachment goes straight to our hearts. And, when, as is frequently the case, they are extremely susceptible of religious impressions, we feel more entire reliance on the sincerity of these feelings. From the little anxiety they evince for approbation, all their good impulses, — though uncertain, rare in their occurrence, and not unfrequently thwarted by some of a contrary nature, — possess an infinite value in our eyes, and fill our hearts with joyful emotions. Joy, indeed, is the predominant feeling as regards these little beings ; they advance so boldly and resolutely to the encounter of life, that we can hardly help imbibing some portion of their confidence in the future.

But in proportion as the feeling of sympathy becomes weaker, and the desire of independence stronger, the difficulties of education are greatly increased. One reason of this is, that we too long neglect to associate a sacred feeling of duty with filial obedience. When this obedience is not the effect either of reflection or habit, a crisis takes place, at seven or eight years old, which many parents are afraid to encounter, and the consequence is that they transfer their duties to the schoolmaster. This is what I am most anxious to prevent, by show-

ing them that, unless some particular circumstances render the plan impracticable, the time allotted for their sons remaining in the family circle may be prolonged till they are ten or twelve years old, without diminishing the advantages which will certainly be derived at a later period from public education.

How much is included in the simple expression, *remaining in the family circle* ! If the child can indeed be retained at home long enough to have acquired a keen relish for domestic pleasures before he has learnt to enjoy any others, how many recollections, how many feelings and images, alike pleasing in themselves and favourable to morality, will be formed during the years which I am so anxious to claim for the parental roof ! I do not of course refer now to those happy countries where the few hours spent every day at the college do not interfere with general domestic habits ; but, where this is not the case, what courage must be required to separate ourselves from a son before either he is known to us or we to him ! to give up our power of obtaining glimpses of his character, — transient and uncertain at first, but becoming every day clearer and more determined, — and of being thus enabled to form plans for his education founded on personal experience ! Besides, of how much happiness do we thus deprive the child ! How indistinct in his eyes do all the relations of



domestic life become ! No lasting friendship will afterwards strengthen the ties of nature ; sisters and brothers hardly seem to exist for each other, when the recollection of that time when all their pleasures and all their griefs were in common is carried too far back into the twilight mists of infancy. And all those peculiar circumstances of situation, fortune, friends, or neighbourhood, which constitute the individuality of a family — everything which cannot yet interest a child of seven years old — must be forever lost to him. At least he will learn them only at an age when the whole course of his thoughts will have taken a different direction. But even this is not the most important loss, nor one which is entirely irreparable ; the essential consideration is, that in schools the education of the heart is very much neglected, and that the task of inspiring our children with an actuating and enlightened spirit of religion, ought to be trusted to no one but ourselves. Some good dispositions will no doubt be left in the heart from those devotional feelings which are so easily excited in early childhood ; such slight impressions, however, like a thin vapour, are swept away by the gales of life. But a religious culture which is continued till the pupil is ten or twelve years old leaves a far deeper impression ; and, what must especially interest the mother, on whom the duty of

this religious education generally devolves, the same feelings which will prove their most certain safeguard and consolation will always be associated in the memory of her sons with her gentle image, and will be indissolubly connected with filial love.

Nor is it difficult for masters or parents to keep children at home on a level, as regards instruction, with those educated at schools; for private education is generally more rapid in its progress than public. Sometimes, indeed, it may happen that private pupils are not so thoroughly grounded in what they have learnt, and they may therefore fail in obtaining the first prizes. But a certain degree of effort on their part will soon make up this deficiency; and this little check to their vanity may prove a salutary lesson for them.

The period we are now to consider, that which intervenes between ten and fourteen, is one in which a healthy child generally makes great progress in his studies. He displays, perhaps, even more vigour — more *action* — than we shall observe in him a few years later. Not yet absorbed by the reveries of youth, free from that inward agitation which will hereafter trouble his brightest days, his head is generally clear, and his mind, simple and true, fully capable of comprehending the objects presented to it. His views, however, are not yet greatly enlarged; he

is principally occupied with his own success, and his enjoyment consists more in the intellectual strength which he has acquired, than in the search after truth: he may be said rather to take possession of knowledge than to form any judgment of it; and he has hardly an idea of any excellence greater than the model he has fixed on at present. Not yet feeling that aspiring energy which transports our wishes beyond the limits assigned to them, he longs only for liberty, and concludes that happiness must be its natural consequence. He is not yet aware that his soul will soon experience a craving which will give rise to uneasiness, to trouble, and occasionally to errors; but which at the same time constitutes the dignity and glory of human nature, rendering man incapable of being contented with earthly things, and pointing him out as the future inhabitant of a better world.

Yet this very deficiency in moral greatness is, perhaps, the cause of the boy's being more fitted to fulfil his present destination, that of acquiring such instruction as is necessary for him. In fact as far as relates to his intellectual progress, we have not much reason to find fault with his disposition; it is with his conduct towards others that we are inclined to be dissatisfied.

Of course it will be understood that I am

not now speaking of children who have been carefully brought up, but only of those who have not been preserved from the infection of such faults as are common to their age. What generally happens in this case is, that after having submitted for a time to a methodical system, they become wearied of this regular order of things, which is too monotonous for their taste, and does not afford sufficient scope for those occasional bursts of uncontrollable energy which are felt by all young minds. As they know exactly what is required of them by imposed regulations, they also know how far they may venture to infringe these rules without incurring more risk than is sufficient to give additional zest to the transgression. Having once declared war against order, they continue to display a spirit of opposition by which they contrive to annoy their instructors in a thousand different ways.

When a particular disposition is so common as to have attracted the attention of teachers in every age, the cause must, no doubt, exist either in the state of society or the constitution of individuals. Both these causes unite in producing the effect of which we are now speaking. Boys in the last stage of childhood, becoming every day more manly, feel that they are not yet admitted as members of the social system; they are required to wear its shackles themselves, with-

out having any right to impose them on others. The developement of their intellect makes them unwilling to submit to the insignificance of their existence; the experiments of life which are within their power are neither numerous nor decisive enough to satisfy their desires. Urged by that insatiable curiosity with which they have always been inspired, they are anxious to behold the effect of every new condition. People, animals, things, must all be removed from their situations, in order to produce incidents, and to allow full scope for the performances of chance. As at five years old they broke their toys to pieces in order to see their internal construction, so now they amuse themselves with endeavouring to lay open the secret springs of human conduct, by overturning all conventional forms.

Such appears to me the explanation of that love of mischief which has ever been the reproach of schoolboys. They procure for themselves in real life the same pleasure which we seek in the representation of a comedy, — that of seeing grave personages, while quietly employed about their ordinary affairs, suddenly placed in some ridiculous situation. But this amusement cannot be considered as an innocent one. Children who are allowed to indulge themselves in it, learn to be indifferent to the pain they inflict—even to be vain of the power

they possess of wounding; and thus, under an appearance of gaiety, dispositions the most deplorable are fostered.

We must, however, allow that the subjects which children usually choose for the exercise of this propensity are generally some particular faults, or little peculiarities. They delight in unmasking, contradicting, and teasing, without mercy, a studied gravity, an assumption of pedantry, an excessive importance attached to trifles, or any thing like affectation. But we shall seldom have occasion to complain of them if we ourselves are open, natural, and cordial in our manners. Even in such things as may not please them, they will respect the motives of duty by which they know that we are influenced; wherever they clearly recognize the voice of conscience, they submit at once to its authority. Speak to them as moral and reasonable beings, and they will become so; but do not haughtily exercise the prerogative of age.

The faults most common to this period, — insubordination, a fondness for censoriousness and raillery, and a taste for mischief, — arise from a variety of causes; amongst which, perhaps, none is more universal in its influence than the uncomfortable situation in which young people find themselves placed in society, and the necessity they are under of submitting to the will of persons older than themselves, but whom they

are not disposed to consider as their superiors in understanding. In some institutions the difficulties arising from this cause have been in a great measure obviated. A little society of children having been artificially formed, in which all the arrangements of an older society have been imitated and the children themselves constituted the prime movers of every thing, their activity has been supplied with employment and their pride flattered, while at the same time they have been brought less into contact with grown-up people.

Even in private education, if a father make his son a partaker in his interests and plans, and give him as much as possible an active part to perform in them, he leads him to forget that he has after all merely a deliberative voice in his decisions, and thus prevents the growth of such faults as often arise only from mortified self-love.

A state of internal disorder is not unfrequently produced in young people by the inaction of particular powers, the exercise of which is too apt to be neglected in ordinary education. Thus, too much sedentary application produces either a restless craving for action, or a state of physical and moral lassitude still more to be deplored. But, though the same evils may display themselves under a variety of forms, they are still all proofs of a

want of happiness, if not of a state of suffering, in the pupil; and a delightful mode of animating and embellishing his existence seems at once presented to us in the use of amusements; but how much care is necessary in order to render the effect of these amusements always salutary!



## CHAPTER II.

## AMUSEMENTS OF BOYS.

THE instructor who watches most assiduously over the moral and religious progress of his pupils, and considers this the great object of all his efforts, must not, on that account, neglect to provide also for their pleasure. Both from observation and feeling he will be led to give his attention to this subject, and will be as strongly urged by *his* instinct to make them happy, as they are by *theirs* to be so.

We have already declared our opinion, that the idea of holding out pleasure to children as the sole object of all their actions, should be rejected with contempt; and we have expressed our disapprobation of their being taught to consider duty only as a means of rendering pleasure certain and permanent. But every one will allow that an element so universal, so constantly exercised, and even so indispensable to existence, must form a necessary part also of education. If carried to excess, its effects may, no doubt, be injurious; but in regarding its influence with distrust, we cast an imputation of blame

on the arrangements of Providence. Children, as well as inferior animals, are governed by the gentle laws of pleasure, and we are thus provided with one means of guiding them; but it is from the gradual introduction of another principle of action that man acquires by degrees his true superiority. Hence arises an arduous and doubtful struggle between two elements, not indeed incompatible, and often naturally connected, yet at times opposed to each other, in this world of trials and difficulties. To enable the law of duty to gain the victory is the task of education, and must also be that of the soul throughout the whole course of life.

These considerations, unless I am much deceived, will enable us to view the subject in its true light. Pleasure, so far from being in itself hurtful, may be considered in general as salutary. It is only by the prominent importance attached to it, by the serious part which it occupies in the thoughts, and by the habit of engaging, not only the power of instinct, but that of the will also, in its favour, that it becomes injurious to our moral being. A deliberate and premeditated search after it seems to imply a degree of craving selfishness; but some good may generally be derived from such objects as produce innocent enjoyment. They do not address themselves to the senses alone,

but develope and expand existence; they speak to the imagination, and exercise the understanding. Let us, then, not only allow, but welcome, the assistance of pleasure: yet at the same time let us endeavour to make it, if possible, glide in imperceptibly, and remain concealed amongst the blessings of nature.

An opposite plan is, however, too frequently pursued. Pleasure, instead of being kept out of sight, is brought forward as an object, and, as such, is even pretended where it does not really exist. Its name is inscribed at the head of every chapter; we hear of the pleasure of study, the pleasure of goodness, — of benevolence. We are even told of all kinds of bad pleasures; and it seems to be thought of little consequence what their nature may be, provided some temporary object be attained. But is there any object which is of sufficient importance to justify the use of such means?

The natural effect of this conduct is, to impress children with a firm conviction that pleasure is the great end of life; and the mind, being thus constantly engrossed with this one prevailing idea, is deprived of the free exercise of its powers, preoccupied by a feeling of regret for the loss of some amusement, or with the idea that a particular employment must be tiresome. Hence the progress of the intellect is retarded; the habit of judging of every thing

from the feeling of the moment becomes confirmed; and, even if the higher duties be allowed to retain their due importance, a degree of petty selfishness is impressed on the whole character. Children have always innumerable objections to bring forward against any thing which is proposed to them. Little disposed to make those trifling daily sacrifices which sweeten all the relations of social life, they are too often unpolished, rude, and unconciliating in their manners; affording a mortifying, though not always a certain, indication of the state of their heart.

We cannot deny that pleasure will always be sought on its own account, independently of any other consideration; and that it is idle affectation to pretend to look upon it merely as a means of improvement. Let us then allow of its introduction whenever it can be innocently enjoyed, but be careful not to give rise to disappointment by promising it beforehand; let us bestow it more liberally, but talk about it less. Let us consider the tendency of any projected amusement, and if it appear innocent, give it a trial; but not permit a repetition of it, until we have observed its effect upon the character. By an examination of this kind, entered into both before and after the experiment, and in which the pupil may himself take a part, he will perceive that pleasure is not made the one essen-

tial object, but that the really important consideration is, the moral state of an immortal being.

Having thus, as much as possible, deprived pleasure of its supreme authority, let us behold it in a subordinate rank, and examine its effects, when, either imperceptibly, or without being previously announced, it assists in augmenting the enjoyments of youth. Considered in this point of view, the judgment we form of it will not be at all unfavourable.

If a child be so happily constituted that all his impressions are clear and lively, the most simple pleasures are what he most values; associating themselves closely with all those indefinable joys by which, at this early period, the heart is moved, they become a part of his daily life and happiness. Yet it may sometimes be wished that he should, by some more decided and distinct feeling of enjoyment, lay up for himself a store of pleasing recollections for the future. And for this purpose we must not undertake to regulate everything, but must allow such happy incidents to occur as arise from a proper degree of liberty. Our pupil, therefore, should not be constantly under the control of our laws; as long as our influence is felt, even if it be only in his amusements, a secret motive will exist which will prevent any free exercise of his will; and yet it is very desirable that he should at times take a higher flight; that he should make

a complete, and, above all, a voluntary trial of his powers. In this case, therefore, the perfection of design consists in avoiding, not all risks, but all such as might prove too dangerous; at the same time leaving something to chance, which so often corrects erroneous calculations, and repairs the faults we have ourselves committed.

An occasional burst of energy is natural and desirable for children; their blood must at times be allowed to circulate with increased rapidity: sudden resolutions must be required from them by unexpected events. Now, such occasions are afforded by the exercise of unprompted activity, and by the powerful call of unforeseen pleasures on their energy.

We must acknowledge, however, that the immediate effects of a keen relish for pleasure, do not appear favourable to education, particularly as regards study. It distracts the ideas of duty, and is prejudicial to application; the activity which it excites is not easily regulated; we are perplexed by the multitude of desires to which it gives rise in the youthful breast, and, if continued too long, the difficult task of bringing these under subjection to authority has again to be commenced. We should, therefore, be careful not to foster a craving after variety and new sensations, by which the common course of daily life is rendered flat and uninteresting; and

we should grant any uncommon, or very artificial amusements, only as exceptions, or under particular circumstances.

If a spirit of happiness prevail habitually in our family circle, let us not seek for any change. As long as our children are gay, animated, and full of activity, we may rest assured that all is going on well. But, even when the best arrangements exist, a secret listlessness will often creep in; and for one defect, perhaps of all others the most adverse to improvement — an apathetic indolence — a remedy may sometimes be found in pleasing and lively emotions. At least, there is hardly any other which will prove efficacious; for this is an instance which strongly forces upon us the conviction that our power is limited.

Moral energy seems to be an especial gift of the Creator, — the effect of a peculiar organization; and it is much more easily restrained than excited by education. Children, as well as men, may be told to regulate their desires, to obtain the command of their feelings, to consider the consequences of their actions; but they can scarcely be desired to act more energetically, to be more eager in their wishes, to prefer the ennobling exercise of their faculties to a state of inaction. In proposing to them to exchange that tranquillity, which they are able to appreciate, for enjoyments which they do not

desire, we are at once aware that they cannot enter into our views.

Different stimulants are necessary for different dispositions and ages; but pleasure seems to be intended to constitute one of the springs by which the youthful mind is actuated. We may, indeed, at times, be troubled by the distraction which it produces; but it also tends to reanimate the moral existence, by rousing the mind from a state of lethargy. No similar effect can be produced by pain, which, if used as a means of reformation, is seldom beneficial to children. It may, indeed, under the name of punishment, possess a temporary value in education; but any lengthened mortification, far from being salutary, only paralyses their faculties, and renders their dispositions morose and selfish.

Pleasure, on the other hand, tends to expand their souls; it makes them affectionate, open, and generous. It may be considered as a stimulant, frequently necessary, but which must be used with a judicious economy, in order that it may continue both a pleasure and a stimulant; for it is well known how soon it changes its nature, and, consequently, loses its good effects. If continued too long, or if too intoxicating in its character, the result is precisely the reverse of what we wish—the mind is enervated, instead of being invigorated.

Perhaps there is nothing which ought to be



more sedulously avoided than the duration of that state of distraction and folly into which children are thrown by some kinds of amusements. Hence, the injury to them from plays, balls, concerts, and such other recreations as are intended for grown-up people. The late hours, the crowd, the heat, the lights, the music, all tend to excite in them strong, and yet fluctuating feelings, productive of no one good effect ; and their lassitude the next morning, the vacant expression of their countenance, their inaptitude for any application, prove that they have been forced out of the natural and healthy state of childhood. Nor have I here alluded to the many other evils arising from these amusements; the vanity, the premature impressions, and even passions, which are developed. If such pleasures be allowed at all, it should be with the utmost moderation, and only because the prohibition of them might occasionally be productive of still greater evil.

Such recreations as may be pursued in the open air, — running races, games at ball, cricket, swimming, or riding, — are the amusements natural to boys ; but as they form a daily part of every education in which the health of the pupils is duly considered, the mind cannot receive any new impulse from them. This may, however, sometimes be effected by the sacrifice of a few days entirely to pleasure.

The teacher often derives advantage from his pupils being placed in a situation which may afford new materials for his observations; and it is equally desirable that the pupils themselves should be able, sometimes, to break through their accustomed habits, and disregard, to a certain degree, the restraints and wants which are the creatures of civilization. Nothing conduces more to the accomplishment of this double end, than an occasional little journey or excursion; in which, especially if made on foot and without any previous preparation of every thing likely to be wanted, various adventures are sure to occur. No project, no reward, acts so forcibly on the imagination of children; the exaggerated idea they form of their strength, the wonders they discover, the curiosities they collect,—all tend to inspire them with a lively zeal; even the necessary preparations are a source of delight. And when experience follows, with its various consequences, its train of unexpected joys, and sudden disappointments; its feelings of vanity, at one time wounded, at another flattered; its alternations of gaiety and depression,—a complete exemplification of human life is afforded, and much instruction gained both by the teacher and the pupil. Selfishness, or consideration for others, forbearance or impatience, every quality, whether good or bad, is called

forth, and the character displays itself openly and decidedly.

If we are fortunate enough to possess friends who are watchful and enlightened parents, a further advantage may be derived from entrusting our children to them, for a few days of complete amusement, unaccompanied by a tutor, and thrown entirely on their own resources. In every family some objects are considered of greater importance than others; the blindness of one parent on a particular point may be compensated by the clear-sightedness of another; and thus each fault in its turn be corrected. We may, indeed, by this means be made acquainted with some mortifying truths; but still they are truths, and, as such, should always be received with attention.

Besides, unless we have some means of ascertaining in what estimation our children are held by their companions, we shall never acquire a true insight into their characters. In the presence of their elders they never show exactly what they are. It is so clearly their interest to please us, and keep us in good humour, that there is often a degree of affectation even in their praiseworthy efforts to behave well. But, with their equals, their natural frankness is displayed, often rough and unpolished in its outward manifestations, but accompanied with

many valuable qualities. More independent themselves, and judged of more impartially by their compeers, a new light is thrown on their characters; and an instructor will often be grieved to discover, that his favourite pupil, who was so intelligent and docile at his lessons, is deficient in firmness, candour, and all those generous qualities which determine his rank among his equals. He perceives that a capacity for study is not all that is required, and he learns to consider his pupils, not merely as present scholars, but as future men.

One of the most indisputable advantages of public education consists in the numbers of boys who meet together in the hours of recreation. The play-ground, constituting a little world of children, all eagerly engaged in games, which, however noisy and riotous, have been handed down from one generation to another, and thus acquired a title to our respect on account of their antiquity, — the play-ground is itself a school, where the various duties of life are learnt. There, both experience and energy are gained; and not only that strength of mind which produces forbearance, but that which urges to action, is also acquired; all caprices and exaggerated pretensions are brought down to their proper level, and pre-eminence is attained only by such qualities as must always constitute the true elements of superiority in man.

In a large public school, all the children are, of course, on equal terms in their hours of amusement; and thus a feeling of liberty and strength is developed which is not so frequently acquired under the parental roof. On the other hand, this advantage is, perhaps, in some degree counterbalanced in private education, by the power we possess of choosing, as children become older, such amusements as are better calculated for exercising the mind.

The celebration of particular anniversaries, as a sort of happy family festival, often affords a means of developing the talents, and exercising the imagination, in a variety of ways. Magic lanterns; little theatres, the different parts of which are prepared by the children; acting proverbs, or charades, in which the incidents of domestic life may be represented, sometimes in a ludicrous point of view, sometimes in an interesting manner; — all these may be made productive of much enjoyment; and, by the surprise, the pleasure, or the emotion, which they cause in parents, will draw still closer the bonds of affection; increasing, in all, the disposition to be pleased, and the desire of giving pleasure, and strengthening every good feeling in minds susceptible of gentle impressions.

## CHAPTER III.

## ON PUBLIC AND PRIVATE EDUCATION.

By including in our previous observations the period which intervenes between the age of ten and fourteen, we have passed by the time when the question which is about to occupy our attention is usually decided by parents. But this violation of the order of time was not without its use; it was necessary to take a general view of the character, situation in social life, tastes, and even amusements of older children, in order that the choice to be made between public and private education, might be founded in some measure on a consideration of these circumstances. We shall now return to an earlier period, and endeavour to afford some assistance to parents in their decision on this important question. When children have attained the age of ten or twelve, it must be acknowledged that such parents as have already decided in favour of public education, cannot any longer defer the departure of their sons from home: and even those who had not previously considered such a sacrifice as necessary, are frequently obliged to resolve upon it.

It is, indeed, always a painful determination, especially for mothers; and particularly so, when a complete separation takes place, and we entirely lose sight of children who have hitherto been the object of such constant solicitude. How can we bring ourselves to expose to the rough storms of life the young plants which we have been so tenderly sheltering? How can we bear to think of their losing that pleasing appearance and manner which we have taken so much pains to form? And above all, why should their morals, which have hitherto been preserved in all their purity, be exposed to the danger of corruption? Why should they be deprived of that daily family worship which gives rise to so much good and kind feeling? The only answer to these questions is, that this step is too often rendered necessary by their early education not having been either sufficiently firm, or sufficiently religious; the springs by which it was moved have ceased to act; parents have communicated their own failings, under different forms, to their children; their conduct to them has fluctuated between weakness and severity, and not having succeeded in establishing any certain rules, as sacred laws, they have been continually obliged to have recourse to an authority which has, consequently, soon been exhausted. As boys advance in years, and their manly character begins to be deve-

loped, personal dependence becomes repugnant to their feelings; yet they would readily have agreed to observe any established regulations. The temporizing nature of the parental government begins to be felt, both by father and son, and they are less inclined to trouble themselves about any necessary arrangements; a spirit of indifference diffuses itself over everything, and innumerable abuses creep in. The resolution which decrees his son's departure to school is the last act of authority exercised by a father before he resigns a government of which he is become weary; and he rejoices in the numerous reasons which enable him to justify this measure to himself. If the subject be considered without any reference to experience, we must allow that the motives which would lead us to decide in favour of public education are very powerful. To compare with perfect impartiality the advantages and disadvantages of the two modes of education, we should take the highest degree of excellence in each as our standard. But though a father may perhaps be able to ascertain which is the best existing public institution, he can never feel sure that the plan of private education he may adopt, approaches the nearest to perfection. With regard to a public school, much information may be procured; the character and acquirements of those who preside over it; the degree



of progress made by the pupils ; the estimation in which they have been held after they have left the institution ; — all these particulars may be ascertained with considerable accuracy. In short, a variety of facts may be obtained, which we are quite unable to collect with regard to private education.

We must, therefore, always remain in a state of uncertainty as to the probable result of the education we bestow on our sons at home. Nor will this uncertainty be removed by the father's taking on himself the task of instruction. Who can tell beforehand how far he is fitted for this task? Does he know that he possesses the talents, patience, firmness, penetration, and tact, which are all so requisite in a teacher? Can he undertake to use the necessary severity towards his children, and yet to retain their affection? Will he not fear that the effect of his paternal admonitions may be deadened by their being brought into common use in the innumerable little trials incident to teaching ; and their authority, on occasions of more importance, be thus endangered? This difficulty, though it has frequently been overcome, is yet one by which parents are most apt to be alarmed.

A tutor may indeed be procured ; and a valuable resource seems thus presented to us. No doubt there are many excellent instructors ;

but how are they to be discovered? Every quality which we should desire a friend or a brother to possess, we must also wish to characterize our assistant in the most delicate and important of all undertakings: yet how little knowledge do we generally possess of the real character of those to whom we venture to entrust our sons!

And even when the most fortunate choice has been made, the best instructor can do no more than supply the place of a father, and will necessarily have the same difficulties to encounter. That constant obstacle to all instruction — the impossibility of making children understand the necessity of it — will always occur; and the authority with which he is invested is less absolute and indisputable than that of a father. On the other hand, in public education, this obstacle is unknown; no school-boy expects that his wishes should ever be consulted; the power of example is so great, that he concludes what is learnt by the whole school must be right; and tasks, which might have appeared an arbitrary exercise of authority, seem to him so necessary, that I have known great astonishment expressed by a very intelligent school-boy when he heard that there were boys who did not know how to decline *musa*, a song.

In private education, on the contrary, every thing becomes the subject of discussion. The

repugnance which children always feel to any thing like restraint displays itself in an antipathy to particular studies, especially such as require much application ; and, if they can quote the example of other children who are not required to perform the same tasks, they at once conclude that their teacher is tyrannical or capricious ; and sometimes he is himself led to distrust his own authority. Hence, a constant uncertainty takes place both in the subject and mode of instruction.

Another disadvantage in private education arises from the want of such points of comparison, as may teach the pupil what we have a right to expect from him. Every thing is considered, naturally and allowably, in a moral point of view ; but this very circumstance renders the instruction superficial and deficient in energy. If a child, to whom a task not really above his capacity has been allotted, appear to have done his best, and to have given his attention to the execution of it, can we conscientiously blame him, even should it be wretchedly performed ? His intentions have evidently been good, but his will has not been sufficiently energetic to enable him to overcome difficulties. He believes that he has done all he could, and how can we make him understand that he deceives himself ?

Not having any more certain test by which

to judge of his will, we are obliged to make success the measure of his power; and it is only by a comparison with the success of others that the pupil becomes aware, that a very little additional effort would have enabled him to accomplish what was required. We could not make up our minds to punish him, and it would be unjust if we did; but at school experience would have supplied what was wanting in our discipline; and would have taught him that, in a world where no one inquires as to intention, the result only is appreciated; and that when this result is deficient, it generally arises from the will having been feeble.

But it is not merely as regards instruction that public education possesses so many advantages; its superiority is still more clearly displayed in strengthening the character, and in favouring the developement of energy and all the other manly virtues.

It has been observed, that if domestic education be prolonged till the age of ten or twelve, it possesses, amongst other advantages, that of drawing closer the bonds of family affection: we are thus enabled to cultivate in boys those habits of consideration and politeness which may be said to constitute the civilization of individuals, and to bestow a degree of dignity on those who have acquired them. But it must also be allowed that, if the pupil remain at home be-

yond this age, he will run great risk of becoming effeminate. In the quiet of domestic life there is little scope for the display of energy. The weak are protected; no one is called on to defend either himself or others; a happy state of things, no doubt, but not the most likely to produce strength of mind.

Physical courage may, indeed, be acquired and confirmed by means of gymnastics and other bodily exercises. But how can moral courage, that rare and inestimable quality, which enables us to resist caresses, flattery, or violence, be obtained in circumstances which render opposition to almost every one blameable? Yet such is the situation of a child brought up under the paternal roof: he is not on a footing of equality with any one; differences, either of age or condition, separate him from all around. He is required to give way to the little ones, because they *are* little; and to his elders, because he owes them respect. How is he thus to acquire any clear ideas of justice?

But at school this is not the case; there a complete system of equality prevails. Not feeling that either respect or generosity are particularly due to any of his companions, he becomes accustomed to disregard alike solicitations and threats, when he believes justice to be on his side. Sometimes, it is true, his anger may be excited by menaces, and is not then

satisfied to display itself only in complaints or tears; but even this effect, if restrained within certain limits, may not be without its advantages. This period is almost the only one which affords a boy a safe opportunity of acquiring amongst his equals a just reputation for courage, because he then confronts dangers which, though real in his eyes, are not very formidable in themselves. At a later age, young men are again under the control of consideration and politeness, and quarrels would then be followed by too serious consequences.

Besides, at this age, it is time that our pupils should begin to live like men; that they should form a part of that exclusively male society which, after being again collected together at college, is destined to become the ruling power in this world. In domestic education, as the men of the family are generally engaged out of the house in their several concerns, women constitute the majority at home. The pupil who is accustomed to pass his leisure time with them, associates himself in their occupations and interests; the smaller duties of society, or relationship, take up too large a share of his thoughts; in short, he becomes effeminate.

In order to maintain a healthy state both of body and mind, two different kinds of treatment seem required, each of which should predominate according to circumstances; one of

gentle consideration, the other of a more invigorating nature. In early childhood the former method is generally necessary; for it is impossible to treat this age with too much tenderness and delicacy; but it is equally impossible not to perceive the necessity of a more hardening system as the pupil grows older. We must, no doubt, still make use of many precautions; we must continue to question and examine as long as we preserve the right to do so. But, by saving from all trials human beings who must, in after life, be subjected to them, we may be guilty of great imprudence.

Children, therefore, acquire in public schools principles of conduct; they learn the art of placing themselves on equal terms with their equals, and discover by experience how far it is desirable to inspire them with respect by firmness, or gain their affection by complaisance; and how they can serve them without being their slaves. The pupil who has been made familiar with the working of the passions in other children, at the same time that he is less suspicious, is also less liable to be imposed upon, and less selfish, less astonished at bad examples, and yet more capable of resisting them. He will proceed with a more certain step in his own career, and will also understand better how to influence others; for, enlightened by experience,

he will know what effect to expect from the use of particular means.

It might seem, at first sight, as if that originality by which individuals are sometimes characterized might be more fully developed in an education which would allow of the cultivation of particular dispositions. But this is not the case. It may sometimes happen that pupils who have been privately educated differ more in their real character than those who have been brought up at public schools; but this does not show itself in their outward deportment. Ill at ease with their companions, not knowing how far they may venture, or when they should keep silence, feeling that they do not harmonize with those around them, their good sense, if they are fortunate enough to possess this quality, will at least teach them to pursue the safest plan, and they will retire within the circle of commonplace ideas. Thus, the pupil who has been brought up under the paternal roof is often endowed with less strength of nerve than the school-boy, who, from his infancy, has found that, in order to gain attention, a degree of hardihood must be infused both into his expressions and his manner.

Hence it is that the preacher, the dramatic author, the political orator, — all, in short, who are called upon to address popular assemblies,



are benefited by imbibing the spirit of the multitude — by feeling themselves public characters rather than individuals. It may not be the same with the contemplative poet, the metaphysician, the theorist ; and yet how much is gained by those who reap alternately the fruits both of solitude and society !

But, numerous as are the advantages which might be derived from public education, most of them have hitherto been overlooked. Limited to mere instruction, the developement of the whole character is neglected ; and neglected, too, under the very circumstances which would be most favourable to the influence of education. Talents and capacity cannot be interchanged ; but the expansive nature of those feelings, which are in general so little attended to, is well known ; the affections are communicated with electrical rapidity. And as no emotions but such as are salutary will be excited by a conscientious instructor, nor any feelings but such as are praiseworthy be displayed with eagerness and adopted with joy by young people, every ennobling and generous sentiment will increase in indefinite progression.

The truth of this was exemplified in the fifteenth century, in an institution called *La maison joyeuse*, of which an interesting account has been given by Madame Guizot ; and, in our own time, a similar instance is afforded us by the

establishment at Hofwyl, under the superintendence of M. Fellenberg. All the members of the numerous family here collected seem animated by mutual affection ; all seem to live in the same atmosphere of benevolence. The older pupils call the younger ones "our children;" and all, though natives of twenty different countries, in speaking of the territory of Hofwyl, say, "our fields, our woods, our buildings." Feelings, equally gentle and elevated, are expressed in their songs, which are heard with the deepest emotion. It would seem as if such impressions could never be entirely effaced, but that the pupils of this institution must form in every country a society of enlightened friends ; a most beneficial result for the wandering inhabitants of this unsettled world.

The effect of impressions thus communicated is so great that all systems of public education are unconsciously benefited by them. The energy excited in schools by example might be the means of creating a kindly spirit of emulation, arising solely from the pleasure of advancing in company with our fellow-beings. If the master be capable of fostering such a spirit, if he possess that cordial gaiety which is not at all incompatible with firmness, he will be not only respected but loved by his pupils, and they will be earnest in their desire to please him.

In England, the good effects resulting from

disinterested emulation have been tried. Prizes have been proposed for those masters whose pupils have made the greatest progress; and the pupils have, in consequence, made both greater and more successful efforts than if they had been influenced only by the hope of personal recompence.

Were the various resources of public education better understood; were that wish to do well, and to advance in learning, which is as natural as the desire of bearing off the prize from their rivals, brought more into play, it seems to me that, as regards instruction, the same results would be obtained, and that the advantage as to the moral feelings would be great indeed.

But, in order to influence these feelings, we must, even with young children, address ourselves to "*the inward man*;" — to that being which lives and grows within him, and is every day either advancing towards perfection, or becoming more depraved. And, without the assistance of religion, how can this inward man be formed by public education? If we wish our teaching to reach the heart, can a more persuasive and penetrating voice be found? I am not now speaking of a systematic exposition of religious doctrines; differences in modes of worship, or in the opinions held by particular sects, may prevent the introduction of the peculiar doctrines

of Christianity into the public instruction which is designed for all. But that religion which is universal, those primitive and sacred truths which constitute the foundation of every form of worship, and are implanted in the breast of all human beings, why should not they spread over and pervade the whole of education? Innumerable allusions, innumerable references to the ideas of a perfectly holy God, of his providence, of the immortality of the soul, and of future retribution, would be at once understood — would bestow a vivifying power on instruction, and impress on it a character of holiness; while, by a more particular teaching, given separately to children of different persuasions, that moral influence — that regenerating power — may be supplied, which might be wanting in natural and universal religion. But let its sublime truths be heard by the whole body of pupils; and let those enlightened men who, in different countries, preside over the national education, unite in cultivating such elevating and sympathetic sentiments, as may form a bond of union between the children of the same God, from one end of the world to the other.

## CHAPTER IV.

ADVANTAGES OF CLASSICAL INSTRUCTION DURING  
THE PERIOD BETWEEN TEN AND FOURTEEN.

In the early part of childhood, instruction appeared to have two main objects in view: one, to accustom children to the exercise of their attention, and to the observance of exact rules, by means of regular, but short, lessons; the other, to interest their minds in more general ideas, by communicating to them occasionally such knowledge as seems to be within their comprehension.

But under whatever form instruction may be presented, it is absolutely necessary, at this age, that the attention should never be too long fixed on the same object. Variety of occupation seems to be dictated by nature. Mental, as well as bodily, exercise may be frequently, nay, almost constantly, employed, provided even the most trifling efforts of the mind be not continued for any length of time in the same direction. This has been placed beyond all doubt by well-attested experience. In the infant schools at Geneva, as well as in the Lancasterian institutions, to which the children

are afterwards transferred, it has been found that pupils of ten or eleven years old, had made as much progress in a variety of studies, as their contemporaries at other schools had done in an exclusive pursuit.

Let us compare the characters of these two ages; and in order to make the difference between them more distinctly marked, let us take them at their two extremes. A child of eight years old thinks only of accomplishing his daily task: he wishes, indeed, to please his teacher, by which his idea of duty is satisfied, and with which he may perhaps also associate some vague idea of glory; but as to any thing more, his only object in study, as in every thing else, is amusement. As long as all is new, and only the cream of instruction is offered to him, he finds pleasure in learning; but if difficulties arise, or if he have by some error displeased his master, he is disheartened. A happy remedy is then found in some new object, by which he is restored to a more favourable disposition. In each separate study, however, he has made a certain step; and as he makes another the next day, he will be found in the end to have advanced considerably in all.

But as he becomes older, a great change takes place. Having acquired both more energy and more solidity of character, he is no longer satisfied with trifling amusements. His flex-

ibility of mind, too, has diminished ; and he cannot now change at once the current of his ideas ; but, when sufficient time is allowed for an impulse to have been given, he advances with rapidity and steadiness. He is influenced by a double motive ; the interest he takes in the subject of his study, and the wish to cultivate his mind. Unknown regions are opened to his view, and he desires to gain possession of them by his own efforts. The greater the success attending these efforts, the more enjoyment does he now feel, and the more does he promise himself in future ; foreseeing that his progress must, in the end, be productive of happy consequences to himself. But whether he seek truth for its own sake, or with a view to the personal interest which he has in his success, he is equally annoyed if he be continually interrupted in the pursuit. If the direction of his thoughts be perpetually changed, their energy is weakened, and his mental power diminished.

During the period with which we are now occupied, that, namely, which intervenes between infancy and youth, great care should no doubt be taken to avoid fatiguing the pupil ; but by constantly adapting our instruction to the more childish part of his character, we prevent the formation of a more desirable disposition. We may, for a time, flatter ourselves,

that, by continually varying our lessons, we are amusing the child: but, as science cannot always be presented with its fairest side towards him, his energy soon declines; he takes even less pains with each particular study, because he hopes to find others not so difficult, and thus becomes successively disgusted with all. Having satisfied his curiosity by the superficial trial he has made of each, he arrives, without any taste for knowledge, at that dangerous age, when an innocent pursuit of any kind — any interesting occupation which might have been kept in reserve for him — would have been his best safeguard.

In attentively considering the developement of the faculties, we perceive, that a state of simple comprehension, in which the understanding remains passive whilst a multitude of different ideas are presented to it, is far inferior to that more animated state, almost amounting to activity, produced by the predominance of one ruling idea. Why is it that women are, for the most part, so indifferent as to their mental improvement? Why do general ideas appear to them so uninteresting, unless they are connected with their personal feelings? Is it not because the instruction they have received has been irregular and incoherent? They have been led from one



subject to another, without being allowed to fix their imagination on any one object.

It seems, therefore, desirable that as the pupil becomes older, instruction should be divided into larger portions — into distinctly marked branches of knowledge. When, through the medium of one predominant study, the same general turn of thought prevails for a sufficient length of time, the mind, constantly dwelling on the ideas thus presented to it, becomes thoroughly imbued with them. The pupil acquires a real taste for knowledge; the interest he takes in his lessons is not confined to school-hours; and he advances with rapid strides. All great progress is generally made by starts — by fits of application. Hence both Locke and Lessing have advised that only one thing should be taught at once. One single branch of knowledge, thoroughly understood, is of more value than a thousand superficial notions; one single instance of complete success gives more promise for the future than a thousand half-finished attempts.

Yet the advantages arising from this unity of instruction should be combined, as much as possible, with those which spring from variety. If they can be thus connected, a moral harmony is established, and the mind is prevented from becoming too exclusive, or partial, in its views.

Let us consider what conditions are necessary in order to justify us in making any single branch of instruction predominate for a time in intellectual education.

The first of these conditions is that the mental faculties must not be allowed to remain idle: the reasoning powers must be exercised, and the memory cultivated; the feelings must be cherished, and the imagination gently excited. It would also be desirable that the difficulties presented by the study should gradually become greater, and should allow of exercises sufficiently varied to suit the dispositions of successive years. If, in addition to these advantages, it were possible to connect the main branch of study with so many collateral ramifications as would enable the pupil, without losing sight of the end he has in view, to acquire on his way a variety of interesting knowledge, this would be a most fortunate circumstance. Lastly—and this is a most essential, I had almost said vital, condition as regards this period, when the mind is perhaps more than at any other time open to the influence of good impressions—the impulse given to the pupil by this study must not be opposed to that which ought to be followed hereafter, both during the remainder of his education, and in the future course of life.

But is there any study which is capable of

fulfilling all these numerous and important conditions? I must own that in my opinion there is only one, and that is, what is generally termed classical instruction.

Let us endeavour to weigh the merits of this study impartially. In the first place, it has an ostensible object — an object, too, which, in the eyes of children, is a noble one. They feel that antiquity, with all its marvellous histories, will appear clothed in still more splendid colours when they understand the language in which the ancients themselves spoke. But even this is not the most important point with the instructor. He desires to obtain the use of the only power — a power, too, possessing infinite variety — which will enable him to cultivate all the faculties of the soul; and in teaching the principles of language — the symbol of things — and of universal grammar, both which may be made the objects of a distinct and well defined study — he finds this power.

It must, however, be understood, that we are here speaking of language in the most enlarged acceptance of the word. To acquire a knowledge of the rules by which it is governed, to follow this representative of thought into its various modifications, is a far more noble, and we may say more substantial, study than that of any particular language. But when this study is applied to such languages as are ex-

cellent in construction, and highly polished in form, the pupil follows it with more interest as well as greater advantage.

What is it that we find wanting in those to whom we deny the character of men of talent? They are perhaps not so deficient in the total amount of intellectual power as in the faculty of using it in detail. Their conduct is often judicious enough; but, not understanding their own motives, they are at a loss how to influence others; and this incapacity arises from their not handling with facility the instrument by which ideas are separated and classed. Now this instrument is language; and, in order to use it with advantage, the bluntness which it contracts from being constantly employed must be polished; nor must the pupil, from his daily use of it on ordinary occasions, be allowed to acquire a habit of expressing himself vaguely, and of attaching no definite meaning to his words. He who is unable to appreciate different terms with correctness, to discover their exact value, and to ascertain how far their meaning is, or is not, clear to his mind, can hardly arrive at a high degree of cultivation of any kind. That mode of instruction which is best calculated to form this sort of capacity is perhaps also the most generally beneficial; but the study of our

native language alone is not very advantageous in this respect.

In fact, it is not very easy to fix the attention of the pupil on the meaning of single words, when he at once comprehends the whole sentence. How should such an analysis interest him, when he can both understand others and make himself understood without it? He has not a great variety of ideas. A certain number of set phrases serve him for all the purposes of common life; nor is there, in his mind, any distinction between thoughts and words. If, in order to exercise him in distinguishing the delicate shades of meaning of which words are capable, you introduce him into a region of more elevated ideas, you present these ideas to him ready dressed, as it were, in your own language; and, as you have clothed them in suitable terms, why should he make use of any other? He contents himself, therefore, with taxing his memory to recollect your words. Or suppose you require a composition from him: as he is at liberty to write only what he chooses, if he feel any difficulty in expressing a particular idea he will change it for another.

But, in teaching a foreign language, the pupil may be most usefully exercised in compiling a sort of abstract of his lesson; and, as he can understand the meaning of any phrase only by men-  
v translating it, he is, in fact, seeking expres-

sions in his native language, and is, therefore, studying it through the medium of the other.

Besides, the mind is endowed with a singular tact, by which the pupil soon perceives that no two words in different languages correspond exactly; that they intersect the unbroken tissue of thought at different points. In his endeavours to express the meaning of an author, he calls to mind all the synonyms he can recollect; he tries them successively; the slightest shade of difference in their meaning strikes him, and his sagacity and discernment are thus exercised and strengthened. What more could we desire?

But a still higher branch of this study is that relating to the rules which govern the connection of words—the study of syntax, or universal grammar. The ingenious device, by means of which the relation of ideas to each other, to the speaker, to the past, or the future, is indicated by a slight change in the form or position of different words, is so curious, that nothing can be better adapted for developing the intellect. There is, moreover, so much analogy between the thoughts themselves and the expressions in which they are clothed, that in studying the mechanism of language we are also studying the laws of the human mind.

No one, indeed, denies the desirableness of teaching children the general principles of grammar; but it is often asserted that they may

learn these through the medium of their native tongue, with which they must, of course, be made acquainted. Experience, no doubt, shows that this may be done; but the same difficulty arises here with regard to the analysis of sentences which we have already alluded to as occurring in the definition of words.

These difficulties may, perhaps, be overcome by teachers who possess the art of inspiring their pupils with zeal for their own improvement; but how seldom are such instructors to be met with! and, consequently, how few children are there who feel any anxiety on this subject! By far the greater number require a more ostensible object: every effort which they make must produce an immediate result — a good or evil consequence. Everything with them must become matter of fact. Now a blunder is a disagreeable fact — a difficulty overcome, an agreeable one. But in their native tongue they make few blunders. Custom can readily be referred to in every case of difficulty: it is a game in which no interest is excited, because they cannot lose, and are not aware when they gain any thing.

But in any other language (the Latin, for instance) the case is different. The attention of the pupil is attracted by the circumstance that a particular termination has the power of referring the words of a sentence to the order

required by the sense, and that he is thus enabled to discover their true meaning. He experiences a degree of pride in being able to understand, or to compose, a Latin sentence; he feels that he is really making progress; whilst, on the contrary, all grammatical niceties, when applied to his native language, appear absurd and useless.

But when these distinctions have been once established in a language in which their effect cannot be doubted, the pupil recognizes them again in every other language. Sentences, as well as the words of which they are composed, are all subjected to grammatical arrangement, and any peculiarities in his native tongue are rendered easy. Thus, whilst the task of Latin or Greek composition facilitates the knowledge of grammar, the exercise of translation gives the teacher an opportunity of attending, not only to the orthography but to the correctness, and even elegance, of his pupil's style.

Did the question relate only to the comparative practical utility of the languages, there can be no doubt that we ought to possess the most thorough knowledge of that which we are in the habit of speaking every day: but, even allowing this, we should still say, that this object does not depend so much on grammatical distinctions as on early attention to the subject; on good society, together with the perusal of the



best authors, and the learning by heart some well-chosen extracts.

But we are not now speaking so much of any particular language as of language in general; and if it be true, that when thoroughly studied it may be regarded as an instrument peculiarly calculated for sharpening the intellect, it is evident that we must not expect the greatest effect from this instrument when its edge has become blunted from long use. It is, however, true that the study of modern languages affords many of the advantages of which we have been speaking. But is there any living language which is not inferior, in many respects, to the classical ones? German—the only language in any degree capable of superseding Greek and Latin in a grammatical point of view—cannot be compared to them in beauty of construction, in grandeur, harmony, or in its effect on the youthful imagination.

Besides, if we are seeking for a study, in which may be comprized every thing likely to assist the cultivation of the human mind, we shall find that this object cannot be accomplished by a living language, without some accompanying disadvantages. As a knowledge of any language cannot be acquired without a corresponding knowledge of its literature, the mind will naturally receive a particular colouring from this circumstance; and a German, French, or

Italian character, partaking more of a foreign nationality than can be desirable, will display itself in the expressions, and even in the ideas, of the youthful generation. But we are much more likely to avoid this disadvantage, and to maintain a due proportion in the several branches of education, when we make use of that model on which the great minds of every nation have been formed. Classical instruction, influencing the thoughts by means of the expressions, has created both spirit and form ; and, penetrating with every ray of light, has ever been the life-diffusing sap which has developed the various germs of talent.

It must, however, be owned that, in teaching the classics, that mode is still adhered to which has the rust of time fastened on it. The instrument which might have served for the development of all the faculties has not been applied with efficacy to any, and their growth has consequently been stunted. More energy might have been given both to a spirit of analysis and investigation, and to the culture of the imagination ; and it might, perhaps, have been desirable to keep the exercise of these faculties more distinct. For instance, if the pupil were encouraged to rely more on his own powers, and could be inspired with the desire of making out for himself both the meaning of sentences, and the principle of their construction, much advan-

tage would, in my opinion, arise from this exercise of his reasoning powers. In general, however, the master speaks too much, and the pupil thinks too little. Of course, the latter must not at first be expected to do more than refer to the most simple principles. But we often err from an excess of refinement in our teaching. By the multiplication of rules, by making new ones, not only for exceptions, but even for the exceptions to those exceptions, it has been imagined that the task of instruction would be rendered easier. But the result has been a confusion of ideas, and a mixture of uncertainty and obscurity, particularly calculated to disgust children. The pupil, who has become familiar with an author, may, perhaps, enter into some of the delicacies of his style; and, if he be endowed with talent, may even occasionally transfer them to his own compositions; but in this case he is more guided by his memory, and a peculiar tact, than by any minute distinctions. Let us furnish him with some real employment for his faculties; otherwise, unless he remain completely idle, he will exercise them without our knowledge. By many well known expedients, such as the repetition of certain passages, extemporary dialogues, and dramatic representations, a great degree of interest may be given to the lessons, and children may derive as much pleasure from their newly

acquired knowledge as if they were more thoroughly imbued with it.

It should, therefore, be an object with all skilful teachers to enliven, and by this means also abridge, this study; for it would be difficult indeed to substitute any other in its place. Natural history, for example — a charming science, no doubt, but quite unconnected with the moral world — may serve to delight early childhood; but while, as description, it is too trifling to afford for any length of time sufficient exercise to the intellect, as a philosophical study it requires more enlargement of ideas than minds so little cultivated can yet attain. Again, as regards natural philosophy, this, besides being limited to an acquaintance with matter and material forces only, is objectionable in another point of view: in order to attain more than a mere superficial acquaintance with it, a much greater knowledge of mathematics is required than is ever attained at this age. It would, therefore, be previously necessary that the study of the calculating sciences should have been fixed upon, at this most important period, as the principal means of developing the intellect.

We have already acknowledged the necessity of this study; and, though not desiring that too much time should be devoted to it, have made in its favour an exception to our general principle of unity of object in instruction. In

advising that children should attend to this study with a moderate but continued application, we were influenced, not only by the idea of its practical utility, but by a desire to prepare the way for that future acquaintance with mathematical truths which constitutes one of the proudest titles to pre-eminence claimed by the human mind. When a just proportion has once been established amongst the various faculties, the exact sciences, taken in their higher sense, may be considered as the consummation of genius, and produce no injurious effect on the universality of the mental powers. But if the calculating sciences be allowed to predominate during early childhood, they will be found to form much too narrow and exclusive a foundation for general instruction. And, as regards the exercise of the reason — the only faculty cultivated by this study — the direction given by it to the intellectual powers is not so desirable as we might at first imagine. The model it presents is indeed perfect ; but the opportunities for its application occur but seldom. What do we observe in those young persons who have constantly followed a train of exact deductive reasoning, who have been exercised only in drawing correct conclusions from certain fixed principles? Is their judgment on practical subjects superior to that of others? So far from it, that they are often led into errors by a

supposed analogy between the principle of examination which prevails in their studies, and that which ought to govern their habitual conduct. Accustomed always to seek for mathematical evidence, they require it in every case, and consider moral proofs as of little value. But the affairs of life afford only moral proofs; and it is on the confidence inspired by them that our happiness, as well as that of these very mathematicians, entirely depends. Obligated, therefore, as human beings, to be content with these, they still flatter themselves with the idea that their conviction rests on the only species of certainty which they are willing to admit. And as, in mathematics, it is impossible for two principles to be in opposition to each other, as truth, once ascertained, by whatever means it may have been discovered, can no longer be disputed, they listen to no objections. Marching blindly on in the path which they have chosen, they examine no farther, and gain no more information; and hence it happens that they seldom arrive at the correct point of belief.

In the study of languages, on the contrary, the course pursued by the understanding resembles exactly that which is required in judging of worldly matters. There are certain rules to be observed; but we expect to meet with various anomalies: we are continually called upon to

decide between the rule and the exception, and to exercise both caution and discernment in our progress; and hence a tact is formed which is always necessary for the government of our conduct. When we meet with a difficult sentence in a foreign language, a thick mist seems at first to cover the meaning; but light breaks in upon us by degrees; a word, with which we are already familiar, puts us in the right track; others group themselves around it, and at last the whole force of the sense is clearly presented. Nothing can more closely resemble the gradual disentangling of our thoughts on any subject: it is the course pursued in all the discoveries of the human mind.

During that period when instruction in the moral sciences, properly so termed, would be decidedly premature, and when the reason is not yet sufficiently cultivated for such studies as those of law, legislation, civil and political economy, or philosophy, we must still prepare the way for the future acquirement of these higher branches of knowledge. We must lead our pupils to consider human nature under new and various aspects; and nothing tends more to promote this object than the study of history and ancient literature.

Teachers sufficiently enlightened to consider classical instruction in this point of view would find in it a most abundant resource, and one,

too, completely within their own power. It is impossible that the picture of human nature, if true, can always be edifying to children: this fact, however painful, cannot be denied; too many distinctions, too great a degree of intellectual developement, would be necessary in order to regulate, according to a high standard of morality, the various judgments which might be formed of it. But in classical instruction the master is not required to pass a judgment on facts; ideas constitute only a secondary object in his teaching; the expression is what he principally regards. He is at liberty to pronounce judgment or not, as he thinks best, on the merit of particular actions or opinions. But no sensible and good man will allow any opportunity of making a salutary impression on his pupils' minds to be passed over. He will avail himself of every thing which can be understood and appreciated; of every thing which is calculated to excite in them either a noble indignation, or a still more noble enthusiasm. Seizing such opportunities with eagerness, he will dwell on the ideas suggested by them with energy and animation, and thus direct his views at once to the great end of all education.

And how many happy occasions of developing good feelings are afforded by ancient history! In proportion as the difficulties of the language are overcome, the pupil beholds past ages revived



in all their imposing majesty. At the idea of Cato, or Epaminondas, his will becomes more energetic; an ardent love of liberty springs up in his breast. When human nature is presented to him under such simple and striking forms, he recognizes its image in his own soul; he perceives its gradual developement within his own breast, and attains an elevation of thought to which he would not otherwise have aspired. Even his devotional feelings are increased and strengthened, in some imperceptible manner by these studies. I know not what odour of divinity breathes around the great minds of antiquity; but it would seem that God has revealed himself to us in these wonders of his rational creation, no less than in the beauties of nature.

It is hardly necessary to state that all these effects are lost, unless the ancient writers are studied in their own language. Has any woman, I would ask, ever imbibed, even from the best versions, any very ardent enthusiasm for Virgil, or Homer, or Plato? And surely the present age, which sets so high a value on originality, is less likely than any to be satisfied with translations.

In the solution of very complicated questions it is absurd to refuse the aid of experience. Now from a reference to facts on this subject we learn that in the most renowned nations of antiquity the predominant study, during childhood, was that of language; and that for this

purpose the acquisition of some foreign tongue was the means principally employed. The Greeks alone, having no other to study, paid great attention to their own language; which was indeed so beautiful, that they might well do without the assistance of any other. Again we learn that in the dark ages the continuation of this study so completely preserved the sagacity and flexibility of the human mind, as to prepare it for every other species of instruction. In our own time, too, experience teaches us, that this study sharpens the intellect in every possible way. We know that a classical education has produced mathematicians, astronomers, naturalists; but we do not know whether, from a mathematical one, we should have obtained philosophers, poets, orators, and statesmen.

If it be true, then, that the distribution of instruction into distinct provinces has the greatest influence on young minds, would it be possible for classical instruction to be more judiciously placed as to time, than in the interval between ten years old, and fourteen or fifteen? All the accessory information which is connected with it—the history, geography, and mythology of antiquity—is, by the variety which it furnishes, agreeable to this age, without being likely to turn the mind aside from its true object.

Two important branches of knowledge—the

natural and mathematical sciences, and the moral sciences — will, at a later age, bestow their character and colouring on two different periods of youth. And though, as instruction becomes more enlarged, the necessity of preserving, and even increasing, the store already acquired, may render a greater degree of variety as to the employment of time necessary, still only one source of new ideas will be opened at once. The mind will dart eagerly forwards along a well-tracked road, and perhaps the peculiar genius of the pupil may thus be called forth; perhaps one of those decided tastes — so often the precursor of future talent — may display itself, and point out his vocation in life.

It would be very desirable that a choice as to this vocation should be made before the boy has given place to the youth; when this period arrives, instruction again becomes much more varied. The finishing stroke may be said to be given to intellectual education by the different courses of lectures delivered by distinguished professors. If the pupil be prepared to reap all the benefit of such an advantage, if he have already centered all his views on one great object, if he be assiduous in his endeavours to discover in what manner the knowledge he is acquiring can be brought to bear on the particular branch of study he has chosen for his

profession, he may possess at the same time that profundity which is only acquired by devotion to one object, and that universality which will preserve him from error, and bestow harmony and correctness on his judgment.

## CHAPTER V.

SUMMARY OF OBSERVATIONS RELATIVE TO THE  
MORAL CHARACTER OF CHILDREN.

HAVING now arrived at the close of the period immediately preceding that of youth, I shall conclude this part of my work with a brief recapitulation of such points as appear to me of most importance in relation to the conduct of life. Feeling, as I do, the deepest conviction, that society can never attain the highest possible degree of morality, cultivation, and happiness, unless Christianity be made the basis of all education, I have pointed out, and followed, the consequences arising from this opinion, through all the changes produced on children by the progress of time. But in order that these consequences, scattered as they are, here and there, in the foregoing chapters, may be impressed on the memory, they should be collected, and viewed together.

The great object of all our endeavours should be to render the spirit of our education that of pure Christianity; but in the attainment of this object how far do we fall short of what

we desire! Those parents must indeed have formed very low and confined ideas of their duty, who flatter themselves that they have realized them in their conduct. The predominant idea in their minds should always be, that religion and education are engaged in accomplishing the same task. Both have the same end in view—the perfecting of the moral being who is subjected to their influence; and both attain this end by nearly similar means. God, the bounteous Parent of the human race, inspires his children with gratitude by his benefits; and with reverence by the proofs he displays of his perfect wisdom; and having thus disposed their hearts to obedience, he imposes laws for the government of their passions and the regulation of their conduct. Hence in the dominion of religion, as in that of education, a creature naturally capricious, selfish, devoted to physical enjoyment, and a prey to innumerable unruly desires, acquires a capacity for a higher state of existence by means of his intercourse with a superior Being. But as the knowledge of religion is revealed to us, while that of education is not, it is to the Holy Scriptures that we must have recourse for an example and for rules, by which to govern our conduct.

And what we find there is almost naturally suggested to us by our own hearts. God, who is love, has given it as his especial command,

that we should love one another. Our first care, therefore, must be to cultivate the tender affections of our children, without, however, desiring to monopolize them ourselves. Their sympathy should be excited for their brothers and sisters, for all with whom they are connected, even for strangers; in short, they should be inspired with feelings of general benevolence. They should be led to associate their own existence with that of those around them; and their attention, instead of being confined to the consideration of their own impressions, should be turned to those of others: they should be inspired with the wish of obliging, rather than with the desire of gaining admiration.

By living constantly with us, children soon acquire a taste for our pursuits; their attention is attracted by the objects in which we are interested; and a spirit of observation, and even of research, is generated. Every thing around them will furnish subjects for examination, and lead them to seek for explanations; and the desire they feel to understand every thing will not only render them more intelligent, but, by interesting and occupying their attention, will leave less room for the many unreasonable and merely physical desires which necessarily arise when the mind is allowed to remain idle. At a very early age children show a taste for the tranquil pleasures arising from intellectual oc-

cupation, and always return to them with fresh delight. Short lessons—which are, in fact, little more than amusements dignified by this title, but which answer the purpose of impressing them with an idea of duty—serve at the same time to give a regularity to their life, equally favourable to their good conduct and their improvement.

Nor is it difficult, with the disposition children show to sympathize in our feelings, to lead them to associate the idea of God with all their early pleasures. The care bestowed on them, the affection of which they are the object, all appear to them the effect of divine goodness; and their gratitude is increased by the happiness they experience and know how to appreciate. Before long, the pleasure which they derive from the beauties of nature teaches them to adore the Author of nature. At first, indeed, their admiration is confined to such brilliant objects as are calculated to please the taste of a mere child; but, at a later period, more sublime and even terrible objects are felt by them as announcing the existence of a Deity, and displaying some of his wonderful attributes. And even after the knowledge of a more explicit and beneficial revelation is imparted to them, they still reverence that primitive one which is manifested in all the works of creation; and those deep emotions which have led even uncultivated



nations to aspire to the adoration of an Infinite Being fill their breasts with soothing pleasure.

These powerful effects are not, however, entirely confined to the works of nature: from the contemplation of the most finished productions of art a similar feeling is excited, in the moral beauty of which we may often recognize the aspirations of an immortal being. And although their first feelings of delight may arise from the sight of such productions as appear to us trifling, if not absurd, we should be careful not to criticise their taste too severely. Anxious to cultivate a disposition so calm, so expansive, so benevolent, as that of admiration, we should be content to leave to a more mature age the care of rectifying the taste.

But another most essential object is to excite in children a desire for their own moral improvement, and to lead them to feel that conviction which Christianity alone can bestow, that what the most holy of Beings requires from us is holiness of life. By family prayers, and the perusal of the Holy Scriptures, and by conversations suited to their age and capacity, the love of virtue may be created and fostered in their hearts. The effect of this domestic worship is, perhaps, more efficacious, when we do not seek to make it useful in the details of education by employing it as a means either of

obtaining obedience, or of correcting such trifling faults as ought not to be the cause of much anxiety. Our great object should be to associate our children with us in the comfort derived from the inestimable privilege of communing with God in prayer; to draw down his blessing on our family thus assembled together, and to implore his assistance in conforming to his will, and in performing the duties of our respective stations. Deeply impressed ourselves with the conviction that we can do nothing without God, we must earnestly lead our children to apply at all times to the Source of all good. Parents and children—all are here on the same level; for all differences and distinctions vanish before the idea of eternity.

As their moral feeling becomes enlarged and strengthened, children learn to scrutinize their own conduct more severely, and soon perceive that from the indulgence of proud, selfish, or sensual inclinations, they, as well as their companions, are continually led to do wrong. Filial respect may perhaps prevent their discovering the same tendencies in their parents; but we should not hesitate to acknowledge to them that we participate in this respect the common lot. So far from lowering, such an avowal is more likely, in my opinion, to raise us in their estimation. For what can be more worthy of esteem than that constant desire of improve-

ment which is the happy fruit of Christian humility; or than the idea of a still higher degree of virtue, to which, though never attained, we are continually aspiring?

When children are religiously brought up, the idea of duty soon acquires a sacred and obligatory character; but some time must elapse before we can depend on the steadiness and constancy of their good intentions. Their notions of right and wrong are not very clear; their propensities declare themselves loudly, while their reason and conscience speak only in whispers. It is, therefore, of great importance that their idea of duty should be rendered as simple as possible; and this is effected by means of obedience.

It is indeed frequently the case that the idea of duty is, from its very nature, simple and clear, and will be conceived by the child himself, if we only allow him time for reflection. *Thou shalt not do to others what thou wouldst not wish them to do to thee* is a precept so self-evident, that a father has no occasion to enforce the observance of it in his own name. An internal monitor, with a voice more revered even than his, teaches them to condemn all injustice. But every doubtful question should be determined beforehand by parental authority. When all less evident duties are reduced under the single head of obedience, and all

actions are divided into what are allowed, and what are forbidden, temptations are viewed by the child in their true light ; and by habituating himself to resist them, his moral feeling is strengthened, and he acquires consistency of character. Were we to wait till he himself could distinguish between good and evil, it would be much too late to cultivate his power of moral resistance ; and he would soon learn to excuse any desire he felt of doing wrong by innumerable sophisms.

It seems to me, therefore, that obedience is the one condition, absolutely essential, in order to cultivate morality and firmness of character in our children. And have we not, as parents, an indisputable right to exact obedience from them ? Responsible both to God and man, as well as to our own consciences \*, for their conduct, it is our interest, in every point of view, to watch over their actions. Such, indeed, is the relation in which we stand to them, that if we were not endowed with moral power, we should be obliged to have recourse to physical force, in order to preserve them from fatal errors ; and how careful should this alternative make us to maintain such an authority as may prevent our being reduced to this sad necessity !

Nothing, therefore, can release parents from the obligation they are under to enforce obe-

\* May it not be added, to our children also ?—*Translator.*

dience from their children ; but they frequently err by wishing to command and to explain at the same time — two necessary duties, but which ought to be performed in succession ; for there cannot be a worse time for discussing the expediency of an action, than that in which the performance of it is required from the child. Interested either in avoiding or obtaining some particular object, his judgment is biassed ; he hardly listens to what is said, and reasons on it unfairly. On this account commands should always be given clearly and decidedly ; without its being expected by the child that we should declare our reasons for them, or that any remonstrance should be allowed on his part. Any explanation, in order to be satisfactory, must involve the discussion and refutation of objections ; but in such a discussion the true motives of the child — which, after all, would be mere matter of liking or disliking — would be concealed under a thousand pretexts : nor can any thing be more injurious either to the truthfulness of the child, or to the dignity of the parent, than that state of uncertainty, in which each is endeavouring to feel his way with the other — each manœuvring to bring the other to his own mode of thinking. That fondness for disputing, contradicting, and cavilling, without any fixed principles, which is so remarkable in many people, may very likely have arisen from the

attempts at persuasion which parents have substituted for their just rights. And even when persuasion is successful, nothing more is gained than the performance of the particular action required; but in exacting obedience generally as a duty, we are laying the foundation of future morality. After the command in question has been obeyed, and the feelings are no longer interested, the subject may be discussed with advantage, and the judgment beneficially exercised by the consideration of the various circumstances connected with it.

With a view to establish, at as early an age as possible, certain positive laws, we should take care to fix beforehand the punishment which is to follow their transgression; and with respect to punishments, the effect of a slight one (such, for instance, as a short solitary confinement) seems to me much more salutary than that which is produced by those reprimands in which we are often led by the heat of the moment to make use of harsh expressions. Nor should we run the risk of deadening the sensibility of our children, and of weakening the effect of our words on their minds, by reproaching them too often either with want of affection towards ourselves, or want of love to God.

But satisfactory as this implicit obedience may be, as regards the child, something more is required for the man. As children must in

future life determine on questions of conduct for themselves, it is of importance to make their will free and energetic. To expect it to be always reasonable, at present, would be absurd ; and therefore it is only within certain limits that the uncontrolled exercise of it should at first be allowed ; but within these limits it should be completely unconstrained. The employment of particular hours, the performance of particular actions, of no great importance in themselves, should be left to them ; nor should they at such times be encouraged to seek assistance in their difficulties : for it is not desirable that they should acquire a habit either of neglecting the parental advice, or of throwing upon others the responsibility of the decisions they make. Let them learn wisdom from the event ; and though this may prove contrary to their wishes, and they may have to submit to the consequences of their errors, such an exercise of their strength of mind is often highly salutary.

Yet with all our reflections, observation, and experience, many anxious intervals will occur in the progress of childhood, which cannot be got over without much difficulty. Such, for instance, is the period when the charms of infancy have passed away, and the task of instruction begins. It seldom happens that the effects of previous errors are not then perceived both by

parents and children. Even when they have been accustomed from an early age to implicit obedience, we shall still find our children frequently deficient in that energy which is necessary in order to insure a certain degree of progress. They do not find those studies which are most necessary the most interesting; and they have no idea at all of the inestimable value of instruction. But let us not be induced either by employing the vain pretext of amusement as a temptation to industry, or by the promise of pleasures, at best doubtful, and only the more so for having been promised, to deprive them of a certain satisfaction, — that of having performed a duty. By acknowledging at once, that it is not from motives of pleasure, but of duty, that they must apply to their studies, we promote the cause of morality as well as truth. Still as we ought not, except on very important occasions, to have recourse to the highest motives, we require for every-day use some resource which may inspire them with energy and perseverance.

This resource we may find in our children themselves. The assistance they afford us is most efficacious, and increases in usefulness as they grow older. By consulting them, not, indeed, in the first instance, on the nature of our plans, but afterwards, on the means of executing them, we may frequently obtain valuable hints



as to their characters, and the best methods of surmounting the obstacles which oppose their improvement. And if their advice on any point be followed, they will be anxious to prove by their conduct that it was judicious. When they are thus led to take an interest in their own improvement, they will often direct us as to the best means of promoting this object; and friendly discussions may be entered into with them, on the propriety of resuming particular habits, or re-establishing certain rules, which had been laid aside or disregarded; on the arrangement of their daily studies, and on the moral and physical effect of any new amusements. Nothing, perhaps, tends more to cultivate their reason and strengthen their desire to do right, than their being thus associated with us in the prosecution of one common object—the perfecting of their character.

By such marks of our confidence in them they will, moreover, be incited to deserve it; and by this silent appeal to the noblest feelings of the heart, we are enabled to avoid the expedients to which recourse is so generally had in education. Children, for whose edification no preconcerted scenes have ever been got up, who have never been deceived by their parents, will feel for them the most lively affection; but an affection totally free from the weakness of romantic sensibility.

As children grow older punishments become

inexpedient; and yet we should not run the risk of exciting either their vanity, or their physical interests, by the frequent employment of rewards. We may, however, fairly allow ourselves at times the pleasure of showing by some especial favour our particular satisfaction with their conduct. But as such favours are unexpected, the motive for doing right is never rendered less pure by the hope of obtaining them.

But the time will come when this happy period of domestic education must be put an end to, and the pupil be transferred to school. The mutual relations of parent and child become in some degree changed by the progress of time. Having obtained a more complete knowledge of their duty, children are called upon to fulfil it for themselves. Even were it desirable, it is no longer possible, for parents to direct every thing for them; and hence a sort of painful uncertainty, and even at times a degree of coldness, takes place in their intercourse. Our children are surprised that duties should be expected from them which had not been commanded, and we are equally so that they should not voluntarily have performed them. The time for precise commands and for punishments is gone by; our only remaining resource is in exhortations and reproofs, and by the too frequent use of these we are in great danger of diminishing their effect. A degree of relaxation

thus takes place in their studies; and though aware that they are not making sufficient progress, we have no means of proving to them that it might be more rapid. But at school they soon learn this; they find themselves behind their companions in some respects; by a little additional energy, however, they easily make up for this deficiency, and both their minds and character are strengthened by the lesson they have received.

This is, in fact, the essential point. In their comparatively solitary life at home, every thing has gone on perhaps a little too quietly. Such a mode of life if continued too long, would be disadvantageous to the character. But at school they learn, from the anger and quarrels of their companions, of what violence human passions are capable. A lively and often just indignation takes possession at times of their breast, and gives rise to the exercise of the more masculine virtues; and by the frequent occasions which are offered of redressing wrongs their prudence and courage are exercised and strengthened.

Such are the practical methods, such the progress of education, during early childhood. But of what use would this education, or even a still more excellent one, be, without that devotional feeling by which both parents and children ought to be animated? Without this feeling, sentiments of honour and delicacy

might be developed; but where should we find that union, so entire, and so holy, which springs up in religious minds from the feeling that they are united for eternity? Where should we find parents who would be restrained either from too great severity by their conviction of the weakness and liability to err, incident to human nature; or from too great indulgence by their deep anxiety for the welfare of the souls committed to their care? Where should we find children fully persuaded that their submission to parental authority is only what is required by the law common to all; and that the same duty which prescribes obedience to the child, also obliges the parent to have recourse at times to a just severity? And though we might, perhaps, meet elsewhere with a greater or less degree of virtue, this virtue would be stationary — content with having realized a certain idea of perfection which it had formed for itself; and we should never find that constant progress in excellence, that habitual desire (inspired by true devotional feeling), of equaling the high model to which a continual approximation is making.

Yet, in order fully to understand how necessary is the influence of Christianity, we should, perhaps, consider human beings in a body, rather than individually. In reflecting on the state of human society we cannot doubt that, in order to connect men together, some com-

mon interest is necessary ; some common object of veneration ; some common feeling to which, as existing in the breasts of their fellow-creatures, all can address themselves. This feeling is found in the love of God, and in Christian charity. It cannot be denied that an enlightened philanthropy, or a simple instinct of humanity, may be sufficient to induce the rich to relieve the wants of the poor ; but without the aid of Christianity it seems to me impossible to attach the poor to the rich by any other bonds than those of physical interest. It is Christianity alone which can enable them to look up to the rich without envy, and to judge of all external advantages with impartiality. They must be inspired with that happy serenity of mind produced by true religious feeling, before they can feel in charity with those who appear to be placed so far above them in this world.

Nothing seems to me so strongly to characterize our holy religion, and to reveal to us so clearly the secret of its power, as that intimate connection of the highest moral and philosophical truths with the facts recorded in the Gospel. For as, on the one hand, these truths would have been vague and uncertain without the astonishing facts by which they were accompanied, so, on the other, the most miraculous facts would not have afforded sufficient foundation for religious worship, without the concomitant doctrines. Neither their authority nor

their grandeur would have preserved them from the forgetfulness or the incredulity of future ages, had they not, by the comprehensiveness and sublimity of the truths they corroborated, obtained the belief, as well as the admiration, of mankind. And when these doctrines were not only declared, but represented and brought into action, in the perfect life of our Saviour, it was clearly understood that God himself had interposed in order to establish his kingdom in this world.

It is then to the close and indissoluble union subsisting between the form and the substance of the Gospel, that Christianity owes its vital energy. It must, however, be confessed, that there are difficulties in the Holy Scriptures. The figurative and emblematical style of many passages has afforded scope for a variety of interpretations. Yet may not this have been intended by supreme intelligence? This mode of expression, occasionally so uncertain in its meaning, may possess the great advantage of adapting, what is essentially the same, to the infinite diversity of human minds: it may enable the outward form of Christianity to assimilate itself continually to the progress of civilization; and it is not impossible that the true meaning of these figures may, in after ages, be revealed, and produce, for future generations, fruits as yet unknown.

In fact, how can the "invisible things which

are eternal " be represented otherwise than symbolically? Every thing in the universe is symbolical, and declares to us a Deity who has created all things. Like the old Egyptian vases, covered with figures, stars, animals, or plants, the earth itself reveals the secret of heavenly things to him who is able to decipher its mysterious hieroglyphics. Man also presents an image, though an imperfect one, of his Creator. But nowhere is the character of the divine perfections so strongly impressed, nowhere is the idea of them so vividly conveyed to us, as in the Gospel. "*For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*" \*

Let us then acquire and hold fast the sense of the Gospel, without despoiling it of its form; without losing sight of the letter, let us be thoroughly imbued with its spirit. Separated from the form, the spirit evaporates, or becomes corrupted, and is confounded with human systems, passions, and vanity. Let us preserve it inviolate, as a sacred deposit. That transparent veil, which tempers the brightness of divine truth, enables us to recognize it on earth, and to maintain it amongst us in all its purity.

\* 2 Corinthians, iv. 6. 

THE END.

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